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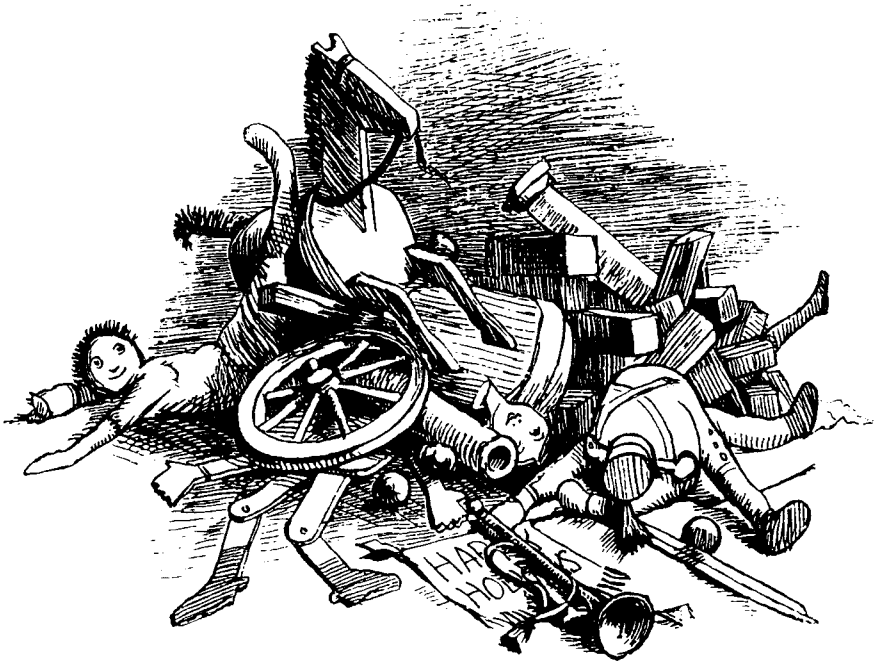

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Comment

Thomas Mann The splendid new biography of Thomas Mann by Ronald Hayman is illuminating and exhaustive, perhaps too exhaustive and detailed, but this is the current mode in biography. The work is especially revealing since Mann's diaries have just been opened up, and there is fresh material about his homosexuality that was known but only slightly. Now it is revealed to have been a powerful impulse – one that haunted Mann all his life and affected his marriage. As a result of this new information, it becomes quite clear that Mann's respectability, passion for privacy, and the demeanor of a disciplined life were his means of controlling and concealing his secret urges.

The diaries also indicate that Mann had an enormous yearning for fame – perhaps not unusual among writers. But there is, too, some indication that he instructed reviewers to write more favorably about him and his work, something more common among lesser talents.

In addition, the biography provides the material for relating the themes and compulsions of Mann's life to those of much of his fiction. His three masterpieces, *The Magic Mountain, Death in Venice,* and *Tonio Kröger,* particularly display the main ideas that were both personal to Mann and at the same time were embedded in the intellectual atmosphere of the period. Many of these beliefs and attitudes were inherited by Mann especially from Nietzsche. But they also were developed in Mann's family history. Thus his polarities between north and south, reason and passion, light and dark, health and disease, bourgeois and artistic, come from his family as well as from ideas that were in the air. In addition, his association of love with death, underground passion with extraordinary persons, came from his personal experiences as well as the aura of decadence in contemporary thought. And these are the themes that pervade much of Mann's fiction and motivate his characters. They provide the thematic structure of *Death in Venice* and are suffused throughout *The Magic Mountain*. This masterly novel is built on the divide between ordinary life down below and the extraordinary world of death, disease, and forbidden love, and the life of the mind in the world above. Similarly, in *Joseph and His Brothers,* the experience of the unusual person, the outsider, is thrust back into the biblical era.

What is most intriguing is the fusion of all these concepts in the imagination of a supreme talent. Thus the tensions of homosexuality are identified with sickness, death, Mediterranean indulgence, and superior vision.

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And what is even more intriguing – and miraculous – is that this exotic construction is embedded in narratives that involve the mundane realities of common experience.

Aesthetic Experience An interesting piece by Roger Kimball in *The New Criterion* about Denis Donoghue's biography of Walter Pater raises the complicated question of the meaning and function of art – as does the book itself. Kimball concludes that the aestheticism of Pater, while eliminating political interpretations of art, is somewhat excessive and limited.

The fact is that in the long history of aesthetic theory and criticism of the arts the question of the nature of art has not been resolved. And it would be presumptuous to assume that it can be summarily explained. But some tentative approaches are possible – at least negative ones.

One of the difficulties is that there still is not adequate terminology. Indeed, many of the words used, such as "aesthetic," "truth," "morality," "beauty," are vague, and their meanings spill over into other realms. In fact, they have been imported from these realms to give greater weight to artistic attributes, lest they be considered frivolous. Thus for many years, critics such as Philip Sidney or John Dryden talked about truth and beauty in literature and the other arts. But clearly they were simply giving them moral status.

Actually, it is easier to be negative in exploring these issues. Hence it can be said that art is not a branch of morality, although literature might contain moral issues. Nor does it advance something called truth. Indeed, Oscar Wilde was at least partly right when he said that art lied. Nor, to repeat, does art simply have an aesthetic, that is, a formal effect, though a formal aesthetic does not itself have a precise meaning. Perhaps it can be said that the term "aesthetic" implies a distinct experience. But there are further difficulties. For example, fiction and poetry, which deal with language, have a range of meanings and references that do not exist in painting or music. (In this connection, it is interesting to note Pater's famous statement that all art aspires to the condition of music.) Another difficulty is that there is a distinction between serious art and entertainment. And not all people respond in the same way to the arts, though I am not sympathetic to current reader-response theories. It also seems to me that there is a significant difference between the way professionals read or look at pictures or listen to music and (for want of a better term) amateurs react to them.

If I might suggest a tentative approach to a so far inadequately defined phenomenon, it is that the arts have traveled far from their primi-

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tive beginnings in simple stories, and animal pictures, and rhythmic songs, and have become complicated by intellectual experience and formal development – to some extent in the direction of abstraction – in the plastic arts and music. The literary arts have added other components.

Perhaps the most that can be said is that the arts present a verbal or a visual or an aural experience that is partly intellectual, partly formal, partly entertaining – though not entertaining in the ordinary sense. If we can use the term "aesthetic," it has to be used as a limiting experience, one that is distinct from morality or truth-seeking, or simply pleasure in the usual sense of the term. Perhaps there is a form of intellectual pleasure that also involves the other senses and is separate from the common connotation of the word – or the idea – of sensual pleasure.

Stephen Spender was one of the few surviving members of an endangered species, a man of letters, and of a related genre, the literary intellectual. He was not only a poet; he was a critic, an essayist, a memoirist, a writer of fiction. He was also at times a political activist; in fact, he was one of the early anti-Communists, a contributor to the famous volume, *The God That Failed*.

He was indeed an outstanding poet, though somewhat underrated because of his supposed flat, understated tone, and its purposeful, slightly awkward diction.

Spender was generous and kind in his personal relations. He had a mask of friendliness, however, that prevented too much intimacy. But it is my impression that he was not envious or competitive. Certainly not ruthless, as so many writers are.

He has left a large space in contemporary literature.

W. P.

Kidstuff? Upon my return from Italy, the June 5th issue of *New York* Magazine was waiting for me. Among its contents were eight pages devoted to the forthcoming movie, *Kids*. I first became aware of this film when, on May 23rd, I read *la Repubblica's* front-page summary of it, titled "Cannes, Violent Sex at the Age of 13."

"The first scandal of the film festival," said *la Repubblica,* "has arrived from America with the film *Kids,* which describes rapes, violence, and use

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of drugs by a group of thirteen-year-old New Yorkers. The audience greeted the film with whistles and shouts of disapproval." I could not resist comparing the reception of this film in Europe and America.

In all fairness, I must say that the *New York* Magazine interview took place before director Larry Clark and screenwriter Harmony Korine departed for Cannes, at a time when they were more concerned with what they would wear, and didn't believe there was "really going to be all this controversy." Such focus, itself, differentiates today's European cinematographers from their American counterparts. Whereas here this sort of feature article could have appeared in dozens of other popularly oriented publications, their European equivalents, I believe, would have been more concerned with the film's possible impact on its audience rather than with the personalities, opinions and motives of the producers.

New York Magazine's summary of the plot indicates what the Europeans may be objecting to:

> *Kids* takes place in one day . . . and tells the story of seventeen-year-old Telly, a so-called virgin surgeon. As the movie begins, Telly is smoothly seducing his latest prey, a sweet-faced girl who appears to be just out of puberty. After a lot of kissing and a lot of convincing (Of course I care about you, he tells her, with great sensitivity), they have sex. Afterward, Telly bounds down the posh brownstone's three flights, meets his friend Casper, who's waiting on the stoop, and describes his conquest in intimate detail. For the rest of the movie, he and his buddies goof around, ride the subways, talk about sex, skateboard, talk about sex some more, go swimming, drink beer, smoke pot, and suck nitrous oxide until they are only half-conscious. They're casually brutal. At one point, one of the kids gets into a scrap with a man in Washington Square Park; the group sets upon him, punching and stomping and swinging skateboards. . . . [And] while Telly is working on deflowering another young beauty, a former conquest, Jenny finds out that she's HIV-positive.

La Repubblica's synopsis doesn't differ. But fifty-two-year-old Clark's Italian interviewer is less supportive than his American counterpart. "Don't New York youngsters have values other than sex?" was his first question. "Kids always talk about sex among themselves, and there is much violence and use of drugs, especially in the center of New York," stated Clark. "That's how the young are, and we were the same way. . . they're in their own world, a hard world." In answer to a question about the reaction of the American public, Clark said that the movie was not yet out, but that he expected it to receive an R rating, and that

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he counted on parents and children going to see it together. And when asked about why he had chosen the nineteen-year-old Korine to write the script, he explained that he wanted to make a film that showed youngsters as they are among themselves, without adults.

The Italian reporter Roberto Nepoti's verdict: "The youngster is bad, but the director is worse." The film is horrible, he goes on, not so much for what it shows – a group of seemingly normal New York adolescents' day of sex, violence, and drugs – but because written by a teenager, this sequence of stupidity, cruelty, and insensibility is sold as authentic juvenile sociology. "In *Kids*, an odious seventeen-year-old deflowers his younger girlfriends and spreads AIDS. . . . This is a sham document that doesn't have a morsel of authentic knowledge of the nature or causes of the phenomena, a 'snuff movie' in which the most fragile corpses are among the interpreters and among the spectators."

Whether this judgment is meant to discourage Italian kids from seeing this film as exemplary of teenage conduct, as an indictment of American behavior in general, or as a more general moral issue is a moot point. Still, unlike the *New York* article, it is clear that the Europeans see this film as more than "relentless and brilliant and extremely disturbing." However, for a variety of reasons, we have come to believe that disturbing creations, *ipso facto*, are brilliant, that to look askance at depictions of sexual violence is to be close-minded or reactionary. The *New York* article immediately goes on to expound, at length, on Clark's early life, his former notoriety as a drug user, his criminal record, and his subsequent fascination with the illegal activities of kids. American readers allegedly expect this sort of portrait. That Clark describes Harmony as "his own work in progress," a bright prankster who left his parents; home soon after his *bar mitzvah*, is also predictable. For the majority in our therapeutic society (or at least those on the two coasts), in a loose application of Freudian lore, take for granted that psyche is destiny. They ignore that Freud and his contemporaries were responding to repressive mores, whereas Clark and Korine are "benefiting" from an already permissive climate and are, as it were, normalizing what in Europe still is considered deviant behavior.

Much of what Clark tells his interviewers deals with his concern about the financial success of his film which, in turn, seems to revolve around the rating it will receive. Predictably, he will argue that artists are entitled to creative freedom. Thus he will be aligned with, and defended by, the Democratic left and attacked by the Republican right. However, he may well get into trouble with the likes of Andrea Dworkin and Catherine McKinnon as promulgating pornography. But all such ideo-

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logical attacks, and defenses as well, I believe, are political smokescreens which confuse moral issues with money.

Ironically, while I was away another issue had moved onto the front burner: Senator Dole's condemnation of Hollywood, and particularly of Time Warner, for flooding the air and television waves, and the pop culture in general, with lyrics that pollute mass culture. Once again, no one was able to rationally question his assertions before this issue was turned into yet another political football – with every politician's eye on the election of 1996. Still, it seems paradoxical that the Republicans, the party of big money, are trying to uphold, or rather bring back, what minimal decency and civility is required to allow our society to continue to function, while the Democrats, the party of the ordinary people, are defending behavior that, ultimately, may do damage to the very people they are out to defend.

The confusion between passing laws that allow freedom of speech and responsibility for the consequences some of these expressions may carry cannot be easily resolved. However, we ought to recognize that we are muddling civil rights with civic duties, money with morals, and in the process, hypocrisy has become the order of the day. That European kids may follow our example, and thereby support the export of "gangsta rap" and films fraught with violence and rape is a boon to our GNP and balance of trade. But to condemn sexual violence has become a moral cliché and to condone it an immoral one. Fortunately, this is not all the country is about. Still, it does not enhance the image of America which already has dropped as precipitously as the dollar.

E. K.

Stephen Spender

A Friend and Early Contributor

1909-1995

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SYMPOSIUM

Unified Germany: Stabilizing Influence or Threat?

Introduction

Igor Webb: Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you on behalf of the President and the Board of Trustees of Adelphi University to this important conference on the implications of the reunification of Germany both for those within the country and those outside it. This conference aptly poses some of the large questions that the University hopes to address next year, when it celebrates its centennial. The theme for the centennial is titled a little grandiloquently, *Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition for the Twenty-first Century*. I hope we can entice you back to Adelphi University for some of the events and symposia we have planned. Clearly, the modern history of Germany, with all of its hopes and tragedies, is a fertile ground for an explanation of the questions the centennial theme suggests. Today's conference in a sense could be said to launch Adelphi University's centennial reflections.

I hope you will allow me some personal observations on the topic of today's conference, by way of introduction. I was born in Slovakia in 1941. I returned there for the first time after the war in 1978 and wrote a book about that return, *Against Capitulation*. A passage from it might help to set the stage for today's discussion, namely my reactions to a visit to Terezín on a beautiful day, not unlike today but in November:

> It has been written of the Holocaust that the unspeakable renders you appropriately and blessedly speechless, since only silence is equal to your impossibly contradictory, besmirched emotions, and your awe. Silence, however, is also incommunicable and opaque, which is why the same writer who perceives its inadequacy winds up composing sentences nevertheless. In this respect it is a terrible disadvantage that you write after the fact. Remembrance can yield skill but dulls horror and much else. Still I remember my dislike at being at Terezín as

Editor's Note: This conference took place on April 1 and 2, 1995 at Adelphi University. It was made possible with grants from the Austrian Cultural Council, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the German Academic Exchange Service, and the New York Council for the Humanities.

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clearly as I am now disliking writing of it. I can call back how I walked from the place feeling violated, a feeling which makes people say 'I don't want to talk about it.' I remember how once outside I was sickened to see people pursuing their innocently ordinary lives, untouched and oblivious. Upon leaving Terezín it appears that this ability to go shopping, say, despite everything, amounts to complicity in all the little outrages which accumulated – and continued to accumulate – into the unheard crescendo of places like Terezín. The townsfolk at their daily round threaten your life because you know that they would rather you die than they, because you would rather they die than you. There is no leaving Terezín confident that the human being is a noble savage poisoned by civilization. No. When you leave Terezín, the daily life outside, the routine of the ordinary person, appears vile. It appears to bear in all its malleable common sense the seed of all cruelty. Cruelty, says Terezín, is not one human quality among many in a compound that goes to make up this or that complex individual and so maybe is not universal, not, in short, really in you. Rather, it says, cruelty is so indivisible that it can, as it here has, become stone, brick and mortar, so tangible as to have been given form here by human beings in that quintessential human creation, a building. It was as if, by so unanswerингly objectifying the evil in men and women, Terezín – and many places like it – had been built and preserved to disabuse you forever of all the arguments to which you had clung about the innate goodness of Man and Woman.

Edith Kurzweil: Thank you, Senior Vice President Webb. I also want to thank all the people who've made this conference possible: the Austrian Cultural Institute, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the German Academic Exchange Service, and the New York Council for the Humanities, and, of course, the administration and staff of Adelphi University. Now, I welcome you all and look forward to your participation. Instead of giving you my own introduction, I will begin by reading the remarks of Blaga Dimitrova, the poet and former Vice President of Bulgaria. She planned to join us but unfortunately could not.

Blaga Dimitrova: The twentieth century's sinister myth is the Berlin Wall. We scratched our anger on it; the wall carved scars in our souls. High, solid, cemented with our blood, guarded more than any other fortress in human history. And one night it suddenly fell – destroyed by surprise, shouts, drumbeat, dust. It isn't clear how. It was razed to the ground. It was broken up for souvenirs of our contemporary Golgotha. I was an eyewitness to that unheard-of euphoria.

And as soon as that dust settled, suddenly, ah! The Wall is gone! And

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now what? It was our landmark. Directions were confused. The left became right, the right left. Which is forward, which reverse? The progressive turned out to be retrograde, the conservative liberal. Where is up, where is down? We were suspended in weightlessness and timelessness. Sometimes I ask myself, "Is it possible that we are buried under the ruins of this wall? Or that we are walled in like the mythical bride?"

A veritable Babel ensued. Words – heavy missiles aimed at the Wall's embrasures – suddenly sunk into a void, without an echo, without a reverberating sound. The words collided in the gaping hole and self-destructed. Microphones muffled the political speeches in public forums. Fundamental notions acquired their opposite meaning: the dialogue became a duel with words, success meant failure, the past turned into future, hope into despair, top to bottom, expectations into a tunnel without an opening, harmony into discord, defeat into victory.

The Wall was a guarantee of our unity. It was our common enemy, and it brought clarity. We attacked it head-on. And now we have hit an unresponsive emptiness. We attack each other. We spat at the Wall, and now we spit at each other. We kicked the Wall, and now we kick each other. It seems as if we need a barrier, a garden scarecrow under our nose, in order to breathe.

The Wall was the source of a useful dream. The darkness of our gray existence was brightly illuminated by the lure of the world beyond it. And then we burst into the hidden domain of longing, of dreams. With trembling fingers, we touched freedom wrapped in gilt paper. With our sharp gazes we broke the display windows, we stretched greedy hands to touch the many-colored goodies, and became dizzy with the enormity of choice. And somewhere amidst all this abundance – where exactly? – we lost our dreams. . . .

We lost something else too – our balance. Was the Wall our support? Is it possible that we two-legged creatures need a prison wall to lean against, to shelter under, to feel its hard, cold touch to wake our energy to resist? We immediately created walls between each other: ethnic, color, personal, religious, party, creative, language – a jungle of walls. Above all, the wall of hatred, charged with high voltage. Woe to the naif who wants to scale it.

Now the world bristled with insecurity, it faced the unknown, standing on the edge of an abyss. Was it possible that the Wall had ironically given it stability? The socialist countries' fugitives rushed through the wide-open entrance toward desirable Europe. The Balkan Peninsula brought back its centuries-old curse, to be the crossroads for exiles from everywhere. The flood of migrating people was rising. What might happen if, God forbid, the Chinese Wall fell?

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Europe badly needs a massive, protective fortress. Now it is replacing the Berlin Wall with entrance-visa barriers, border hurdles, terrorist pogroms against the newcomers, nationalist hysteria – measures alien to its democratic essence. Is it possible that democracy flourished thanks to the Wall?

Freedom creates unlimited opportunities for all of us. This conceals big risks. The most noble impulses are defenseless. Fierce rapacity is unstoppable. How could tenderness fight cruelty? Tenderness doesn't lack courage and selflessness, but will it not fall victim to its own weakness? Who will rush to help the people armed only with love?

In *Sometime,* the wonderful book by the Bulgarian poet Dora Gabe, a little girl shouts at night, "The walls are so nice!" thinking of the walls of her home, which protect her in the dark. The adults on both sides of the Berlin Wall shouted, "Horrible wall, the disgrace of the century, the dinosaur-back of despotism!" And now no one wants to admit it. Not even we, the people of the Balkans, want to admit that we ourselves keep building walls – brick by brick, slur by slur, fear by fear, hostility by hostility. Our last elections show a blind return to the habit of bending our heads in the presence of the Wall. Or the memory of the Wall. Until when? Until the time when we two-legged creatures learn to stand upright, to be our own support, to keep our balance in the swaying world, to move forward without mutual threats and without losing our landmark – the open spaces facing us. Until we become people worthy of the freedom and spaciousness of the future.

Yet in spite of everything, even at this very difficult time for Bulgaria, an unavoidable hope ripens. The children are now growing up without the Wall's ghost. They ask, "Where is this Berlin Wall?" the way they ask their mothers heading for the market in Sophia, "Where is the Roman Wall?" Slowly and inexorably, time destroys the fortified walls of slavery in people's consciousness. Let's applaud it.

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Session One:
Former West Germans and Their Past

Edith Kurzweil: Dr. Webb is going to moderate the first session of the conference. The panelists will be Dr. Margarete Mitscherlich, Professor David Gress, and Professor Burkhard Koch.

Igor Webb: In today's format, the panelists will present their papers, and then comment on each other. After that the floor will be open for discussion. First, we will hear from Margarete Mitscherlich on "How Do Germans Face Their Guilt?" She is one of the leading German psychoanalysts, editor of *Psyche*. David Gress is Olin Professor at Adelphi. He has written, among other books, a definitive history of West Germany. He will speak on "Political Uses of the Past." Burkhard Koch is Professor of History at Humboldt University in Berlin. He has been a visiting scholar at the Hoover Institute and at Georgetown University, and will be talking about "East Germans' Conflicts with Nazi and Communist Legacies."

Margarete Mitscherlich: I thank you very much for the invitation, which I accepted with pleasure.

In 1945, Germans found themselves confronted with the total collapse of their nation, and the world looked on aghast at the revelation of the inconceivable atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis, by the SS, and also by certain divisions of the German *Wehrmacht* – the armed services of the Third Reich without whose active assistance Hitler could never have started the war. No longer could the German people plausibly protest ignorance of the genocide committed in their name. And yet the majority of them still behaved as if Hitler's Reich and its crimes had never existed – an attitude that became even more pronounced after the currency reform, the beginning of the Cold War, and during the years of the "economic miracle."

One result of this negation of the past was the Germans' inability to mourn for their dead. With the cult of the Führer exploded, it was no longer possible to uphold the idealization of the soldiers killed in the war as heroes who had died for a noble cause. These fathers, husbands, and sons had lost their lives for nothing. This truth was difficult to face. Like the extermination of the Jews, it was not so much repressed as negated. For many Germans the only way of coping with the total devaluation of ideas of national grandeur was either to forget the past altogether or to entertain as cloudy a vision of it as possible. On her first

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visit to Germany in 1950, Hannah Arendt already spoke of a "German refusal to mourn."

What do we mean by mourning? Mourning is a reaction to painful losses that frequently appear to transcend the limits of what is bearable. Due to the complete disintegration of national self-idealization, a process of mourning encompassing the whole of the German people did not occur, although the incredible losses of life and humanity, of long-cherished ideals, of territory and culture would certainly have warranted it. While there was much public discussion of the Nazi era in the form of films, debates, and lectures, there was a notable absence of dialogue on the subject at a more private level, in families, schools, and everyday personal interaction. As a consequence, memories of the twelve barbaric years of Nazi rule were largely suppressed, particularly by those who had lived through those years as responsible, thinking adults endorsing or at least condoning Nazi ideology.

Mourning in the face of irremediable guilt cannot be prescribed, neither as to the form it should take nor to its appropriate duration. The refusal to mourn is most frequent when the losses in question are irretrievable and are the source of excruciating pain on the one hand and shame and anxiety on the other, most notably in the aftermath of self-aggrandizement. What do notions like mourning and acknowledgment of guilt mean to generations not directly affected by the losses? Coping with the loss of national grandeur still appears to be a problem. The more immature a person is, the more precarious his self-respect will be. This, in turn, makes it doubly essential for him to idealize himself and to join with other like-minded persons in evincing their contempt for all things "foreign." For those whose mode of experience centers around a narcissistic wound inflicted on their self-love, there can be no empathy with persons not perceived as part of their own self and no mourning for the victims of their prejudices and projections. Yet in the long run it is impossible to deny what actually has taken place. In fact, persons – and this applies equally to subsequent generations – cannot free themselves from their historical responsibility, which defenses against mourning and guilt can only perpetuate.

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) of 1949, however, is proof that after 1945 there was an influential group of Germans not intent on forgetting their guilt, who had learned from the past, who mourned their losses and were pledged to do what they could to prevent a repetition of the history of violence. They were aware of their responsibility both for past and future generations and clear in their minds that if the misdeeds of the past were not to recur, then there could be no division of responsibility. Such Germans existed and exist

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today, even though they may no longer have the influence they once had. Up to a few years ago, working educationally and politically to ensure that Auschwitz could never happen again was the creed that constituted the moral fiber of the old Federal Republic.

Many of today's Germans have memories of the Nazi era, although these may be the product of history lessons rather than personal experience. But they tend to avoid confronting emotions and modes of behavior prevalent in that period, experiencing these as a source of embarrassment, even though it was their parents and grandparents and not they themselves who were directly involved. Thus, they fail to perceive how old, dormant attitudes and projections repeat themselves in the uncaring indifference and lack of sympathy for foreigners and asylum-seekers. They are only too ready to forget that the Berlin Wall was a result of World War II and the Cold War. They have forgotten too why many people inside and outside the German Democratic Republic (GDR) placed their hopes in "socialism with a human face," seeing in it a campaign for greater human solidarity and a weapon against fascism. They have forgotten why so many Germans in the former GDR played an active role in the perversion of that vision. This refusal to recall feelings and attitudes also makes us incapable of understanding and sympathy.

We fend off the memory of the inhuman sufferings undergone by the millions of victims because to this day Nazi Germany's mass extermination drive fills us not only with shame but also – if we allow these feelings to assert themselves – with immeasurable horror; and it represents a massive assault on our self-respect as Germans.

Our refusal to face our feelings of guilt does not allow us to empathize with the victims of the Nazi horrors. There is little general awareness of how differently the memories of criminals and their victims actually work. Not only do they remember differently, they also remember different things. In the same way, the descendants of Nazi criminals have different memories from those recalled by the first and second generation of victims. Many of the latter still suffer from the memory of life under constant threat, of destruction and humiliation. In a number of cases this fear and its psychological effects have poisoned their entire lives. The fate and history of Israel is still influenced to a high degree by the memories of the Holocaust.

For the perpetrators and passive condoners of Nazi crimes it is much easier to forget: they were not exposed to the machinery of annihilation and the feelings of impotence and helplessness in the face of it. The same is true of their children and grandchildren. They suffer instead from the consequences of their parents' and grandparents' disavowed guilt. They unconsciously take this guilt upon themselves and at the same time react

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defensively towards it: it threatens their self-esteem. The ambivalent feelings they harbor towards the self-deception practiced by their parents is a further source of guilt feelings and self-devaluation. The frequent consequence of this is an insidious and tormenting form of self-hatred which many young (and not so young) people can free themselves from only by projecting it onto others – foreigners, Jews, asylum-seekers, and so on.

Of course, we all attempt to suppress our feelings of guilt and shame, of fear and self-disgust; criminals and their victims cannot go on living without the partial suppression of such feelings. It is understandable that subsequent generations should claim that they are not responsible for the misdeeds perpetrated by their forebears. But emphasizing their own innocence will not protect them from the narcissistic anxiety of being worthless because they are German. No one can relieve them – or us – of our historical guilt. This is a good thing. All we achieve by negating our memories is evasion of the opportunity to learn from the past, circling blindly around ourselves and our fantasies of grandeur, exposed to feelings of inferiority and unable to appreciate the real suffering around us. Both as individuals and as a nation the only way to achieve something akin to maturity, humanity, and tolerance – towards oneself as well as others – is to face up to the active challenge that the acceptance of guilt, mourning, and remembrance represents.

Unless we do so, there can be no liberation from the insidious self-hatred. And if that self-hatred remains unconfronted, it will be suppressed and projected onto others in its turn. These mechanisms are still operative and represent the psychological foundations for the attempts of juveniles in both parts of Germany to revive Hitler and all he stands for, transforming their self-hatred into xenophobia and enlisting the support of many fellow-Germans for their depredations.

In many ways, talking of a suppression of the Nazi period and its heritage had become a euphemism, although the crimes committed in those years are indeed frequently denied or – even worse – accepted. Today, nostalgia for the dreadful ideals upheld by the Nazis and the barbarity and racism that went with them finds overt expression, in bars, on the radio and television. Day after day, Nazi skinheads and their right-wing supporters in the East and West of Germany do their best to act out their murderous hatred of asylum-seekers and foreigners. Instances of arson and brutal physical assault have not abated, however low a profile the media may give them. True, other countries in Europe also have their share of hostility to foreigners. But only in Germany has this hostility resulted in actual loss of life.

The official and unofficial efforts undertaken in the FRG over a number of decades to face up to National Socialism and to the Holo-

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caust must not be forgotten. But we cannot deny that since reunification there has been a reemergence of primitive nationalism and a resurgence of anti-Semitism. Sixteen percent of those responding to a survey on the situation in Germany, conducted by the news magazine *Der Spiegel* in January 1993, professed themselves to be anti-Semites. In the former GDR, the figure is only four percent, although dictatorship in one form or another had been a permanent fixture there since 1933. Embracing, conforming to, or actively espousing the form of socialism realized in East Germany was a sure-fire way of being allowed to forget the Nazi past.

When the Cold War set in, thinking in terms of "them and us," "friends and enemies," became the order of the day. Although the break with the National Socialist past was more radical in East Germany than in the FRG, the citizens of the former GDR did not inwardly divest themselves of the Nazi past as outward appearances might suggest. To an even greater degree than their cousins in West Germany, they regarded themselves as the major victims of National Socialism. Under the surface, Nazi thinking retained its vitality in both Germanies. This became apparent with the revival of nationalism and violent xenophobia after the fall of the Wall.

It would be a betrayal of the campaign for a better Germany if we were to renounce the caring solidarity and the identification with the victims of past atrocities that are the prerequisite for compassion and empathy as sustaining elements of our political civilization. To do so would be to destroy an ideal of communal culture to which the best minds in the country once committed themselves. A humane and intellectually acceptable national identity can thrive only on a way of thinking that has submitted itself to a process of collective remembrance, that has learned to mistrust and eschew primitive hostility and infantile national self-idealization. And this way of thinking is the fruit of facing up to guilt and thus achieving liberation from compulsive reenactment, self-hatred, and emotional paralysis.

As we know, a degree of self-respect is a necessary precondition for respecting others. The refusal to mourn meant not only the inability to sympathize with the victims, but it also meant losing the capacity to establish a direct and sincere relationship with coming generations. This enables us to understand why in Germany the contact between older people and subsequent generations is frequently disturbed, why today so many young people appear to be lost and confused, why they have made absence of feeling and fellow-feeling a guiding principle. They are repeating what they saw happening to themselves, their vision of their parents.

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They are reacting to the silence surrounding history, to what began in 1933, when the horrors to come were ushered in by the burning of books. Then synagogues went up in flames; and finally there was the incineration of human flesh. Unrestricted character assassination campaigns opened the sluice gates for an orgy of racial killing. Nazi ideology trained the Germans not to grieve and mourn and not to allow themselves any feelings of guilt. They had been sworn to a mentality of hero-worship, a "dulce et decorum est" allegiance to fatherland and Führer, with the annihilation of Germany's unworthy enemies as the highest priority. Nor should we forget the perversion that went by the name of *Heldenmütter,* hero mothers, women who used the "deceased" columns to publicly flaunt their pride at the heroic deaths of their husbands or sons on the field of battle. As psychoanalysts, we would say that a paranoid-schizoid condition had been inculcated into the German people. They needed enemies and scapegoats, the better to idealize themselves as members of the master race. Their cult of masculinity knew no bounds. Guilt, mourning, and compassion, above all in relation to those who did not belong to the master race and hence merited only abomination, were forbidden on pain of death.

Today many people feel that the achievements, the spirit of renewal, and the willingness to remember embodied by the student revolution of the late sixties can safely be relegated to history. But however unpleasantly inquisitorial this generation could be, and despite the many undeniable aberrations of which it was guilty, its was the first attempt since the end of the war to break the decade of silence observed by their parents' generation. From then on a great deal changed, and for the first time many of my compatriots learned to face the fact that they had been living a lie. Active, conscious mourning became possible. They learned to confront themselves, to bear up under feelings of guilt and anxiety, to regain the capacity for feelings and thus build up a more stable identity.

The post-war generation spent immense energy in removing the mountains of rubble that the war had left. But the mountain of guilt remained untouched, as did the ideological poison that had seeped down unnoticed into the depths of the collective mentality. After the late sixties, entrenched positions and defensive formations came under attack. The cultivation of imperviousness to the suffering of others was called into question. Former ideals were challenged. There was a kind of awakening from the emotional hibernation that had followed the intoxication of war.

Today, more and more Germans in the East and the West are protesting against the destructive and violent hostility towards foreigners.

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Appeals, articles, lectures, functions, and demonstrations are indications. But all the candle-bearers of the last few years cannot conceal the fact that, while the majority of Germans condemn the attacks on asylum-seekers' hostels, they also share the opinion of the perpetrators of such acts that asylum-seekers and foreigners should be removed from German soil as quickly as possible. I would still contend that many Germans have become aware of the regressive thought patterns of the New Right and reject a blinkered, obtuse mentality incapable of a realistic perception of friend and foe, present and past. But a defensive reaction against feelings of guilt still plays a major role, as the following example shows. Since the fifth of March of this year there has been an exhibition in Hamburg entitled "War of Annihilation. The Crimes of the Wehrmacht, 1941-1944." In the weekly newspaper, *Die Zeit,* there was a readers' forum on the subject of these crimes. In this discussion, the members of the older generation who had served in the *Wehrmacht* did all they could to fend off the realization that they belonged to a criminal institution. They showed the same alacrity in denying self-evident, proven facts as was displayed by the German generals in their memorandum to the military tribunal in Nuremberg in 1945, denying that they had been allies of Hitler and contesting any knowledge of or participation in the crimes committed against Jews and prisoners of war.

The documents on display in "War of Annihilation" prove the opposite. The active participation of the *Wehrmacht* in the so-called Röhm *putsch* has gradually come to light. During the war the *Wehrmacht* committed countless crimes sometimes even without direct orders from Hitler. The Eastern front and Serbia were the scenes of the worst military carnage. Diaries and letters of soldiers in action there reveal that, from the beginning of the campaign against the Soviet Union at the latest, everybody knew exactly what was going on. The vast majority of the members of the armed services were infected by racial doctrines of National Socialism.

The title of the discussion in *Die Zeit* was "We Thought We Could Stay Decent." It took a long time for the idealization of the *Wehrmacht* to be abandoned to the point where it was possible to face enough of the past to organize this exhibition. The *Wehrmacht* supported Hitler from the outset; it took part in the murder of *Sturmabteilung* members and of Ernst Röhm. A racially-motivated war of annihilation was unleashed, not by the SS alone, against Poland, the Soviet Union, and Serbia. The *Wehrmacht* also participated in Hitler's campaigns of racial extermination. And since it prolonged the war well beyond the stage when there was any hope of avoiding defeat, it must share the blame for

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the total destruction of Germany.

Despite all these undeniable facts, even someone as astute as former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt finds it difficult to relinquish the notion of a decent *Wehrmacht,* as opposed to the infamous SS. Currently, Schmidt and many others of his age who took part in the war continue to insist that they had no idea of what was going on, and that nothing dishonorable happened in their branch of the armed forces. "In those two years of war service I was never subjected to any National Socialist influence and later – I remained a soldier until autumn 1945, partly as a prisoner-of-war – I never came into contact with anything of the sort. In those eight-and-a-half years I made the acquaintance of only two generals and neither of them were Nazis or war criminals. . . . At that time (1941, Eastern front) we knew nothing of the extermination of the Jews." He adds, "I was lucky."

The need to avoid looking reality in the face and to ward off the guilt and crimes of one's own people has remained a prevalent defense mechanism, even among thinking, reflective individuals. Defense against guilt, the deflection of blame, the quest for new or past ideals that we can fall back on and protect ourselves with are things which are obviously as old as humanity itself. Adam and Eve are the archetypal instances.

Igor Webb: Thank you, Dr. Mitscherlich. Now, we will hear from Professor Gress.

David Gress: Let me begin by thanking Professor Kurzweil for doing me the singular honor of placing my talk directly after that of our very distinguished guest, Margarete Mitscherlich. When I began studying post-1945 German history in a serious way about fifteen years ago, I soon realized the significance of the name Mitscherlich. In the *History of West Germany* that I co-authored some years ago, I used the work she did with her late husband on the "inability to mourn" and the "fatherless society" to set the tone for the section on social change in the 1960s. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that one day I would actually be on a panel with such a legendary figure.

Even legends need criticism, though, so I am not going to pretend that I agree with all of Dr. Mitscherlich's diagnoses of the psychological state of her compatriots or with their therapeutic implications. I do, however, want to welcome and salute her justified ambition to understand the political culture and social change of an entire nation through psychology. Taking a method and a science designed to diagnose and explain the condition of individuals and expanding it to explain, with

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compelling force, the collective condition of millions, and to do so in such a way that the resulting account makes sense and rings true, is perhaps the most challenging exercise possible in any of the human or behavioral sciences.

Before narrowing the broad theme of my own topic, the political use made of the past to constrain political choice in the present, down to concrete cases, I should explain, to those unfamiliar with German political language, the curious subtitle of my remarks, "Lessons from the Stone Age." A *Steinzeit* or stone age is a time of predictability and tedium, a time and place of fixed boundaries, with the added connotation of self-satisfaction. After the upheaval of 1989 and the reunification of 1990, many Germans began thinking of their lives in the old FRG, as it existed before 1989, in terms of such a stone age. Life, if not always exciting, was predictable, the Iron Curtain was permanent, and everyone's pension was secure.

I could go on here to explain how illusory, even in retrospect, such a *Steinzeit* description is: the 1980s after all, was the era of the peace movement and the battle of the Euromissiles. Some of us who watched, but did not join, the march on Bonn in October 1983 against the proposed missile deployments by NATO were convinced, rightly or wrongly, that the stakes of that battle were the freedom of thought and action of Western Europeans who did not want the type of society exemplified by the GDR to expand to the Atlantic. And in that battle, the marchers were on the other side.

To finish off the *Steinzeit* metaphor: the 1970s, remember, was the decade of terrorism, hijackings, and energy crises; the 1960s, of student demonstrations, emergency laws, the *Spiegel* affair, and the Berlin Wall; the 1950s, of the economic miracle which, if nothing else, was certainly not an era of quiet restfulness. My point in mentioning the stone age is twofold: first, to remind you that it included a lot of history, both of the small kind known as personal or family experience and the large kind known as international relations; and, second, that somewhere between those two poles occurred the long-drawn-out, repetitive, and all too often utterly misconceived and misunderstood drama known in German as *Vergangenheitsbewältigung,* inadequately translated as "overcoming" or "coming to terms with the past." I would like in my talk to explain some of what I think this drama was really about; I want to describe and, if possible, decode a couple of significant episodes in it; and I want, finally, to ask if it's really all over now, if the "past" has been come to terms with, or if we are doomed to permanent repetition, Beckett-like, of the same inane sequences performed by actors who remember neither

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their lines nor the name of the play.

First, some "rectification of names," that exercise recommended by Confucius as the essential prerequisite to all sober reflection and good conduct. What past are we talking about? We are talking, of course, about the National Socialist regime of 1933-1945, and in particular that regime's totalitarian character, its violent repression of those it considered its enemies, its lawlessness, its war of aggression, and above all its policy of hunting down and murdering the Jews of Europe. We are not talking about other German pasts, which is important to mention, because often talk in this area tends to drift beyond the confines of the Third Reich. Let me stick, please, to Hitler and avoid the tedious question of German original sin, of the innate tendencies of Germans toward authoritarian government, *Blitzkrieg,* long conditional sentences, or funny-shaped helmets.

Second, to what political uses, where, when, and by whom are we referring? I will start by making the obvious and, I believe, significant observation that "overcoming the past" as a political and social phenomenon in post-1945 West Germany had what at first sight seems a curious history, an oddly inverted career. Consider: the war ended in 1945, and it was in the spring of that year that local Germans were marched through the camps of Belsen, Dachau, and elsewhere by British and American soldiers to see the dead bodies, a legacy of the regime that had just been destroyed. In 1945-46, the Allies held the Nuremberg trials of "main war criminals," which were broadcast to all German homes with a radio. At least one German who later achieved some fame, the political philosopher Jürgen Habermas, has confessed that, as a sixteen-year-old, he performed the act of overcoming the German past with his ear to the radio listening to the trial. This, he tells us, was the critical experience that laid the basis for what, in the context of a later episode in the drama, he names his "constitutional patriotism," his wish that Germany might join the Western community of democratic nations.

From 1945 to 1948, the American occupiers carried out their policy of de-Nazification which involved, among other things, asking every adult citizen in the U.S. zone of occupation what he had done in the war and classifying the respondents according to their answers, and to other evidence if available, in one of five categories ranging from "exonerated" to "heavily compromised." During those same years, both the British and the American forces began to locate and retrieve from Germans property that had been stolen or expropriated from victims of Hitler's regime and to give this property back to the victims or their heirs. This policy continued after West German independence and

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evolved into the vast, incredibly costly and often traumatic exercise known as *Wiedergutmachung,* literally "making good again," or compensation. In the same vein, the West German – but not the East German – government accepted responsibility for the public debt of the Reich, including its social security obligations to its citizens.

Sounds like plenty of overcoming to me, starting from day one, you might say, and you would be wrong. Because when people say *Vergangenheitsbewältigung,* they do not, usually, mean being marched past dead bodies in Dachau; they do not mean listening to the Nuremberg trials; they do not mean de-Nazification or compensation. They mean, usually, the public criticism launched from the political left as part of the social and cultural revolutions of the 1960s; criticisms aimed at existing practices of teaching about the Third Reich, at existing policies of compensation, at the lack, as the left saw it, of public apology and public humility about the past, and at the allegedly authoritarian features persisting in nominally democratic West Germany. The complaint, in short, was that West Germans were not thinking and talking about a certain part of their history in the right way. Above all, they did not have the right feelings about it. The point was therefore to devise such a right way and impose it.

We in America have some experience with agenda-setting exercises of this kind and know, therefore, that once the process has begun it feeds on itself. There is no logical point at which the critics are satisfied and say, fine, now we have overcome the past, let's go on to something else. And this feature of such exercises explains, of course, the curious career of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung,* which is that it grew in scope, seriousness, and alleged urgency as time passed; the further away the war got, and the fewer the survivors and therefore the fewer the criminals, the more ardently did the proponents insist that the exercise was incomplete and needed to be pursued with ever more vigor. And if all other arguments failed, one was sure to work, namely the argument that, for all the efforts of the proponents, the West Germans were backsliding. They were forgetting; they were allowing wrong feelings to creep back into their thoughts. If even the prodigious efforts already made could not stop such backsliding, we were told, that clearly meant that there was much, indeed almost everything, left to be done.

I am not implying that we as historians, Germans, or simply interested parties should ever stop talking about the Third Reich. I want to distinguish an alleged desire to sweep the Third Reich under the rug – a desire often attributed, usually unjustly, to the critics of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* – from a desire to get away from moralizing pedagogy and

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back to sober and serious reflection. Such reflection cannot be dispassionate. But the passion we bring to it and find in it provides a different, clearer, and cleaner atmosphere for thought than the foggy moralism of imputed or insisted-upon feelings.

If you have gathered that I am no great fan of "overcoming the past" as it was usually displayed in West German public discourse from the mid 1960s to the late 1980s, you would be right. Its purpose, to anticipate my conclusion, had not to do with history or with memory, but with current politics; and its effect, as far as understanding the past was concerned, was largely one of obfuscation, not clarity. If you were to jump from that conclusion to another, namely that I blame any part of this spectacle on my distinguished predecessor of this panel, you would be wrong. In fact, it is Dr. Mitscherlich who furnishes us with what I think is the best starting point for explaining what *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* was really about.

In their classic study of the inability to mourn, she and her husband argued, starting in the late 1950s, that postwar Germans' collective inability to purge Adolf Hitler and the Führer-image of Hitler from their unconscious kept them in a permanent state of immaturity and of political and emotional incompetence. The dictator in the mind was, in some ways, as effective a tyrant as the real-life dictator in the Reich Chancellery had been. Now, as a Freudo-skeptic I might argue with that, pointing out, for example, that at least the emotionally crippled Germans of the 1950s were not building or even planning to build death camps, but I won't. Instead I will accept the basic notion of a collective, social-psychological and partly self-inflicted immaturity. Only in my version, the self-inflicted immaturity is that of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* itself.

My view, to be blunt, is that the Germans have the history they have; there is no point in obsessing about its imaginary after-effects to such an extent that you wind up obscuring the real past. Remembering history, after all, should be existential, not pedagogic; memory, even of other people's lives, is individual before it is civic. To quote a recent German comment, there is no point in turning the memory of historical tragedy into "permanent rhetoric" which neither enlightens nor purifies. And I would make a further point, one highly relevant to the other impending *Vergangenheitsbewältigung,* that of Communist Germany, one which must be remembered if German public debate, educational policy, and political etiquette is to avoid another thirty years of *angst*. I observed that *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* was an example of self-inflicted immaturity. Given that it was, to some extent at least, a conscious practice, unlike

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the posthumous Hitler figure of the inability to mourn, why would anyone want to inflict it? For two reasons: to cripple West German democratic self-confidence and self-assertion in the present, and to detract attention from a sober and proper understanding of the past by dramatically insisting on an unsober and moralistic one. If we now ask *cui bono*, we may come up with answers that have the savor of political reality and not of artificial indignation. Two cases illustrate the issue.

The first is that of Hans Filbinger, the minister-president of the *Land*, or state, of Baden-Württemberg in southwest Germany. In 1978, Filbinger was a senior politician of the conservative Christian Democratic Union and the head of government of what was probably West Germany's most prosperous state. Two other facts about him are important for understanding what happened; in a political party whose upper reaches were not exactly overflowing with dynamic talent or intellectual vitality, he was one of the few who could, and did, defeat his opponents on their own ideological ground. Second, it was in his state and on his watch that, in 1977, four convicted and imprisoned terrorists, members of the so-called Baader-Meinhof gang, committed suicide after their followers failed to secure their release by hijacking a passenger airliner and kidnapping and killing a prominent hostage.

Such a man had enemies. Some of them, like the remaining terrorists, were more impotent than dangerous. Others had clout. Some of those are in East Berlin, others in Hamburg. In spring 1978, the playwright and essayist Rolf Hochhuth published a story in the liberal Hamburg weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*. Hochhuth is an interesting character in his own right whose writings have shaped West German public debate and self-image at critical moments over the past thirty years. And he is no radical or left-winger; one of his most interesting essays is an attempt to prove that the Soviet Union and British intelligence colluded in 1943 to kill the head of the Polish exile government in London in order to pave the way for the Communists to take power unopposed in postwar Poland. I mention this to stress that the ideological front lines in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* are neither predictable nor always obvious.

In any event, Hochhuth in this story denounced Filbinger as a "frightful" or "terrifying jurist." This sounds less obscure in German than in English. Hochhuth was referring to the fact that, in the last months of the war, Filbinger had been a junior judge with the German Navy in occupied Norway. Some of his cases concerned deserters, a category that was not unnaturally growing as the end approached. Somehow or other, Hochhuth and *Die Zeit* had acquired material about Filbinger's conduct which they felt showed him to be a last-ditch fanatic who

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ruthlessly and mindlessly imposed death penalties on men whose only crime was not to want to die in the last months or weeks of Hitler's war. If these accounts were true, they disqualified Filbinger from serving in high office in a democratic society.

Some of those most interested in these revelations were the sympathizers of the dead terrorists. To them, it was obvious that the same Filbinger who was responsible for having frightened young men executed in the name of last-ditch loyalty to Hitler had also in some way caused the deaths of the terrorists on 1977. Thus, allegations about the past confirmed convictions about the present. The West German left's constant argument since the 1960s that the FRG was implicitly authoritarian, that its democratic facade concealed repressive urges, received apparent and dramatic confirmation.

Hochhuth fired the first shot, and *Die Zeit* spent sixty-five large pages on Filbinger over the next four months. The most effective campaign against him was waged by another Hamburg publication, the newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*. It was, and is, run by Rudolf Augstein, who devoted sixteen editions and sixty pages to the public moral execution of Filbinger, whom he defined at one point as a "Nazi by conviction," on the grounds that although Filbinger had never been a member of the National Socialist Party, his alleged behavior as a Navy judge was Nazi-like in character. Although neither *Die Zeit* nor *Der Spiegel* endorsed the suspicion that Filbinger had reverted to old habits in procuring the deaths of the terrorists, their campaign clearly implied that Filbinger was unfit to hold office. He should go. And he went.

A triumph for democracy and investigative journalism? Only if you ignore facts. One such fact is that Filbinger's alleged excesses as a Navy judge, on examination, disappeared into thin air. The most serious allegation against him was that, only a few weeks before the German forces in Norway surrendered, he had condemned to death a midshipman who had deserted. Filbinger's attackers did not mention and probably did not realize that this midshipman had meanwhile defected to neutral Sweden, and so there was no way that the sentence could be carried out. Filbinger, of course, knew this and imposed the death penalty only as an exemplary disciplinary measure.

Another alleged inhumanity of Filbinger's concerned a midshipman who deserted, was recaptured, convicted, and executed. Again, the 1978 tales ignored critical facts about the case. They claimed that the man was a highly decorated veteran of the Eastern front, implying that he was a brave soldier who was simply expressing his justified disgust with fanatical plans for last-ditch defense. In fact, he was a thief in civilian life who had

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stolen a dead comrade's papers and decorations. Filbinger nevertheless imposed a sentence of mere imprisonment, but was overruled by his superior officer who insisted on having the man shot. If anyone was a last-ditch fanatic in this case, it was that officer, not Filbinger.

So it went, for every instance of brutality and inhumanity alleged against Filbinger. He sued for libel, and his lawyer was none other than Rudolf Augstein's own brother, Josef Augstein. He won a nominal judgment, but the court found that freedom of the press outweighed Filbinger's honor and career and would not penalize either Hochhuth, Rudolf Augstein, or their journals for what amounted to spreading malicious rumors without proper investigation. Josef Augstein commented that "it is cause for concern that the mass media can so destroy a politician they do not like that he is forced to step down, even though the allegations made against him are unfounded."

A second fact about the whole episode that was ignored was that the supposedly incriminating material had come, appropriately doctored, from the GDR *Staatssicherheit,* the secret service of Communist Germany. It was part of a long-running campaign waged by the East German secret service against conservative West German politicians and leading figures – against anyone who was in a position to make trouble for the German Communists in their drive for recognition by and material assistance from West Germany. And it was not the first time Rudolf Augstein, driven by his own political ideology, had bought into a Communist disinformation operation. The first time was the so-called *Spiegel* affair of 1962 which destroyed the anti-Communist Bavarian leader Franz Josef Strauss's chances to become chancellor. And the *Spiegel* affair, whatever else it was, was also one of the opening shots in the whole drama of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung.*

Am I saying that evidence about people's actions in the Third Reich should have been discounted if it came from the GDR? Yes, if it could not be independently confirmed. The GDR's main purpose was to undermine West German stability and security; every act of the regime must be interpreted from that basic perspective. The German Communists were not disinterested third parties happy to provide evidence that would strengthen West German democracy by rooting out unpunished or unrepentant National Socialists. They were enemies of West German democracy and knew very well how to exploit the West German political and intellectual community's guilt.

Filbinger was a leading conservative who was unafraid to take on the hard left, who did not keep quiet about human rights abuses in the GDR, who refused to shut up about the Germans' right to self-determi-

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nation and reunification, who infuriated the West German left by unapologetically defending West German capitalist democracy, and who refused to release the terrorists when their comrades sought their release. As I said, such a man had powerful enemies. They acted.

The second episode I want to recall is, inevitably, the notorious *Historikerstreit* or historians' quarrel of 1986-87. It's a much messier affair than the Filbinger case, and there are no smoking guns in the shape of Communist disinformation campaigns. In this instance, the West Germans provided their own disinformation. The *Historikerstreit,* narrowly speaking, began in June 1986 and petered out early the following year. But in a wider sense it was simply a concentration of public outpourings, attacks, defenses, misunderstandings, and arguments, some rational, many confused, that had been sloshing about, in some form or another, since the beginning of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the 1960s. In that sense, the *Historikerstreit* had been going on for at least twenty years; nor did it really end in 1987, but is still going on.

At one level, the *Historikerstreit* was about the past, namely about the reason for the Holocaust, the National Socialist murder of six million European Jews. The avalanche of debate was launched by the historian Ernst Nolte who, in an article in the leading conservative daily, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* speculated that the National Socialists were in part following an example, namely the example set by the Bolsheviks in Russia; and that the Holocaust was seen by its perpetrators as a preemptive strike against people who, if not killed, would do to the Germans what the Turks had done to the Armenians, and so on.

These remarks caused a furor, although Nolte embedded them in assurances that two wrongs don't make a right and that no possible number of examples or fanatical beliefs could or should justify the Holocaust. Wittingly or not, his critics seemed unable to distinguish explanation from justification or apology. Thus it became clear that the real issue was not the Holocaust and its real or imaginary precedents or causes, but the very legitimacy of asking such questions, the legitimacy of comparing the Holocaust to anything else, of questioning its uniqueness, and thus the unique burden of German, as opposed to Turkish, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, British, American, or any other history. This legitimacy very quickly became an issue not for scholars, but for those who controlled or participated in public debate in West Germany during the 1980s, those who defined West German public morality, identity, and self-worth. This was made clear by the British historian, Richard Evans, who sympathized with Nolte's opponents when he wrote, "In view of the position and the reputation of the Germans in the world it makes a

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difference whether Auschwitz was unique or not. If the Germans did not commit a crime that differs from all others in the degree of its horror, then they need feel no more ashamed than any other nation and can act on the international stage unburdened by a responsibility for a past that is unique in the world."

That is a strange statement coming from an historian. It is completely illogical. Why should it be the case that comparing the Holocaust to other genocides should remove all shame from German memories? Auschwitz is terrible enough, whether or not it is unique. One could even make the case that comparing the Holocaust to other mass murders should make members of a supposedly civilized people more, not less, ashamed of their ancestors' fall from civilization.

It is not clear to me how this issue of uniqueness can possibly affect the unassuageable regret, shame, and indignation that anyone must feel, German or otherwise, who studies the Holocaust. To use an analogy so simple-minded that surely it occurred to some participants in the debate: if I murder someone, I am no less guilty, and my crime no less terrible, just by virtue of the fact that I am not the only murderer in the world. The interesting question remains: why did I do it? That others have done comparable things is, on the moral level, simply beside the point.

Evans clearly stated the real agenda of many of those who ruled that denying the uniqueness of the Holocaust was illegitimate: to paralyze West German action in the present by constant reference to a past that, increasingly, took on an iconic character as a set of received opinions and rigid moral judgments having less to do with historical understanding or the desire for it than with political mythology in the name of progress, democracy, and humanity.

So, the scholarly result of the *Historikerstreit* – which had far more twists and turns that I can possibly recount here – was nil. The political result was considerable: comparing Auschwitz to anything else became more than ever politically suspect and, in practice, illegitimate. This was understandable in view of the power relations and power interests of West German elites in the 1980s, but it was intellectually inconsistent. Because, of course, every major historical event is at the same time both unique and the result of actions and beliefs that, to be explained, have to be understood in context. On one level, Auschwitz was of course unique: no one else ever did what was done there. On another, it is part of history, and comparison is the necessary starting-point for any understanding of uniqueness, difference, causes, and motives.

A secondary result of the *Historikerstreit* was that it was also ruled illegitimate to try to understand any aspect of World War II, not just the

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Holocaust, from the vantage-point of the historical actors of the time, if those actors were German, or on the German side. This becomes clear from the sideshow to the main event that turned on the essay by the historian Andreas Hillgruber, a discussion of the final stages of the war in the east. Hillgruber argues that the German soldiers on the Eastern Front in 1944-45 were subjectively justified in their tenacious resistance because they feared Soviet vengeance on German civilians and because, in the end, they wanted to allow as many of these civilians as possible to escape to the West. Thus, to apprehend what drove most of these German soldiers was denounced as an apologia for the regime that, thanks to their efforts, lasted a few months longer than it otherwise would. Again, as in Nolte's case, the critics refused, or were unable, to distinguish understanding from apology. In both Nolte's and Hillgruber's case, the result of the *Historikerstreit* was to declare certain approaches to World War II out of bounds. But if scholars are not supposed to understand what made men act in the past, then the past events in question become, as I have said, iconic representations, useful only as brickbats in the present. That is certainly *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* of a kind, but only if you take an instrumental approach to the meaning of that phrase: not "coming to terms with" the past but "managing" the past in the interests of your present-day political purposes.

My concluding question, then, is, whether the past, since unification and since the *Historikerstreit,* has finally been overcome, dealt with, or managed. As you will have gathered, I believe that the growth of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* has been inversely proportional to historical understanding. The more the past is managed, the less it is understood and the less it is come to terms with.

Igor Webb: Thank you for a most thought-provoking presentation, which I'm sure we all look forward to discussing. For now, however, we'll go straight to Professor Koch's talk.

Burkhard Koch: As an East German who has been reeducated in this country I always feel very comfortable in America. It's like being back home when I return to the States. And it is a nice coincidence to be here with David, whose family hosted me during my very first days in this country.

More than five years after East Germany's November revolution, it has become fashionable for some to portray the former GDR as an imperfect but commendable experiment. On the other hand, countering the currently trendy nostalgia which regrets the collapse of the GDR,

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many others hold the legacy of the GDR responsible for almost every problem Germany is confronted with. They locate the country's contemporary problems, particularly its supposed lack of international competitiveness, the neo–Nazis, and the problems of coping with its new international position, in the now defunct totalitarian system of the GDR. Both Communism and Nazism are the common legacies of the reunited German people. However, East Germans have to come to terms with the peculiarities of two totalitarian dictatorships in sequence, the Nazi and the Communist one.

In 1990, when the Western democracies agreed on German unification, they were convinced – and assured by the Germans – that the new Federal Republic would remain the same stable democracy the old West Germany was, encouraging the transition to democracy in the former Eastern bloc. After violent anti–foreigner riots – not only in eastern Germany – and a disturbing debate about the reunified country's national identity as well as confused discussions about its European and international role, uncertainty has replaced the once-euphoric assumptions.

Conventional wisdom assumes that the East German *Länder* are either populated by passive, obedient East Germans, unwilling and unable to work hard, or by the essentially better Germans, who are victims of West German carpetbaggers. In both perceptions, East Germany looks like a crumbling, unpredictable society that would distort West Germany's democracy and reintroduce the intolerance, the mutual hatred, and the authoritarian behavior that once ruined the Weimar Republic. The stability of German democracy seems to be endangered. The dictatorships left their marks. I will concentrate on the structural legacies which the new *Länder* impose on German society.

In 1989, the GDR had 16.43 million inhabitants. Although that is only about one-fifth of the German population, its political and psychological impact, I believe, will be considerably greater than statistics suggest. Unified Germany still faces the question of whether the unavoidable conflicts between two different societies may be mastered, or whether they will lead to instability and a loss of democratic achievements. A failure in integrating East German society into the West German one – that will be more than a West Germany plus sixteen million new citizens – could well lead to serious political trouble, domestically and even internationally.

The legacy of totalitarianism has been often underestimated among the political elites in the West. Like many other Western assumptions about the heritage of the totalitarian dictatorship in East Germany, the belief that institutions could return to normal once the Communist, So-

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cialist Unity Party (SED) regime disappeared was too simple. For democracy as a political form of government depends on particular social and economic structures. But for too long, the political mainstream in the West was unaware that Marxism–Leninism was not only an ideology but also a plan to create a new society, by leveling the entire social and economic structures of bourgeois society and starting anew.

Its adherents believed that one could literally build social change by taking over the social environment and shaping it so as to control the values and behavior of a people, as Marx had proclaimed in the *Communist Manifesto*. Thus, after the Soviets placed hard-line Communists in control of the GDR, not only the large enterprises but even medium-sized ones were expropriated. In 1972, the last private enterprises (those with between twelve and one hundred employees) were nationalized. Some small businesses survived, but they suffered bureaucratic and legislative pressure and overtaxation. Agricultural smallholders disappeared almost completely after the collectivization in 1960.

For a short period after 1945, democratic parties reemerged in the Soviet zone. But when, in the semi-democratic elections to the state parliaments in 1946, the SED failed to obtain the majority in any of the *Länder,* the relatively independent postwar parties in East Germany were forced to enter the collaborationist bloc. Although these parties (Christian Democrats, Liberal Democrats, National Democrats, and a peasants' party) were supposed to act as independent political voices of their respective groups, they essentially transmitted the policies and decisions of the regime to their members in order to secure their support for Communist policies. The GDR became a Soviet–style one–party dictatorship. The ideological and cultural heritage of the bourgeoisie was replaced by a Marxism-Leninism that partly accepted the political, ideological, and cultural traditions of the bourgeoisie. And because at least two generations of East German intellectuals were educated by Marxism-Leninism, the traditions of conservatism, liberalism, and non–Stalinist socialism in both political life and academia disappeared.

The result was a radical change in class structure and institutions, which are unique to Communist totalitarianism. Instead of the social pluralism of a capitalist society, East Germany contained three separate social strata: the nomenclature, in control of the state and the economy, on the one hand; the intellectuals and the workers – who were totally dependent on the state – on the other hand. Analyzing the underlying economics of both Communism and fascism, the differences between these types of totalitarianism become obvious. While Communism destroyed the institutional and structural framework of capitalism, fascism is

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economically compatible with it. As Peter L. Berger puts it, "Capitalism is a necessary – though not sufficient – condition for democracy but democracy is not a precondition for capitalism." Historically, capitalism is the economic counterpart of liberal democracy, but it has proven its compatibility with the most repressive political regime, German fascism. Nazi ideology, which represented the complete rejection of liberal democracy, combined the antithesis of democracy – the totalitarian state – with democracy's economic groundwork: private property, the market, and social pluralism. Stressing both the similarities and the differences between fascism and Communism becomes important, when comparing the transformation of fascist totalitarianism into West German democracy with the transition from totalitarianism in contemporary East Germany.

We cannot comprehend the problems East Germany is facing in trying to install democracy without emphasizing the mass exodus from the former GDR more strongly than is typical. An understanding of the combination of exodus and opposition – unique to the former Communist world – is necessary to explain the East German transition from totalitarianism. Between 1949 and 1989, more than three million people left East Germany. This constituted a brain-drain unprecedented in modern history. Expropriated entrepreneurs, farmers whose land was forcibly collectivized, anti-Communist intellectuals, the entire *Bürgertum,* as well as hundreds of thousands of people who were ready for active opposition, escaped or were forced to go. Those who left were convinced that its political system was simply not worthy of existence. East Germany lost its bourgeois elites in general and its potentially conservative elites in particular. Many of the politically active people who stayed on to fight with – and within – the SED preferred socialism and therefore preferred retaining the GDR as an alternative to the Federal Republic.

Unlike the years of Nazi-dictatorship, when opponents of the regime escaped and organized an external emigration from Nazi Germany, the GDR-refugees were integrated into the *Bundesrepublik*. Because of the mass exodus, the internal emigration, those people who stayed and opposed the Stalinist–type dictatorship was made up of socialists who wanted to replace totalitarianism with democratic socialism, whatever that meant. The mass exodus severely hampered the development of an indigenous anti-Communist and pro-liberal democratic elite of opposition. In 1989, therefore, there was no political leadership to express the interests of people who differed with the leftist counterculture intellectuals who determined conventional wisdom in the West. The latter believed that totalitarianism was only an accretion that spoiled and deformed socialism. East Germany's opposition was much more leftist than

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Solidarity in Poland, the Democratic Forum in Hungary, or the civil movements in former Czechoslovakia. Despite the emergence of some impressive leaders like the Social Democrats' Richard Schröder, Manfred Stolpe, and Wolfgang Thierse, as well as such West German politicians as the Christian Democrats' Kurt Biedenkopf and Bernhard Vogel, who became supporters of East Germans, the East German *Länder* still lack an indigenous elite that expresses the special interests of the majority of its population.

After the breakdown of Soviet domination and the Communist dictatorship, West Germans imagined their Eastern compatriots as a group of Germans "just like us" and predicted an easy return to normalcy. That has shown how shockingly little they really knew about the state of East German society. In 1989, about three million out of the twelve million East German adults belonged to political parties, nearly one in five adults (2.3 million) to the ruling Communist Party, the SED. More than half a million were political activists in front organizations of the SED's satellite parties (*Blockparteien*) that maintained putative independence but figured as conduits for the SED. They supported the regime on every issue. The parties tried to recruit the most talented, most skillful, and best educated. People entered parties for different reasons. There were true believers, opportunists, and careerists.

The politically unorganized, uninterested majority of the remaining nine million adults lived in the "Niche-Society" (*Nischengesellschaft*), a term Günter Gaus, Bonn's first permanent representative in East Berlin, used to describe the withdrawal from public political life. The retreat into privacy, however, contributed to the relative stability of East German society. People did not actively support the system, but neither did they oppose it. The majority of East Germans developed a double consciousness, using politically correct language in public and dissident language only in private circles. According to *Stasi* estimates, about six hundred dissidents with a leadership core of about sixty organized some twenty-five hundred active protesters in the summer of 1989. Some acted under the Church's protective wing, although the Church itself – true to Lutheran doctrine – was submissive to state authority. Thus, the Protestant Church was the only institution with some degree of freedom, serving as a public forum with doors closed to the police.

Democracy has difficulties taking root in a society that was deprived of both its social diversity and its democratic traditions. This presents an enormous challenge for German democracy. It is unlikely that the efforts of West German carpetbaggers to reeducate the former East Germans will change their mentality. The crushing breakdown of the old system,

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however vital that was to a reorientation toward liberal democracy cannot suffice. East Germans will have to shape post–totalitarian politics themselves. However, after over fifty years of totalitarian rule, the East German *Länder* need "democratic assistance." But no matter how well–intentioned such assistance may be, it is unlikely to be very effective, insofar as it humiliates and de-legitimates the individuals and organizations that receive it. It may even create resistance. Now, West German assistance to East Germany is widely perceived as humiliating patronage, because West Germans dominate in high-ranking positions in administration, business, politics, and academia.

In the United States, for a hundred years after the North's victory over the Confederacy, when the North established the rules for the Union, carpetbaggers determined the reconstruction of the South. One hundred thirty years later, power now flows to the South: new seats in Congress come from Texas and Florida; foreign companies invest in Georgia and the Carolinas; enterprising people move to the sun belt. I hope that German reunification provides East Germany with equally favorable conditions to start from scratch toward the resurrection, and evolution, of social pluralism. Eventually, the new *Länder* will be Europe's most modern region. I hope that East Germany's reconstruction will not take as long as that of the American South, and indeed, remarkable efforts are underway. Still, the resurrection of social pluralism takes longer than the restoration of a free market. Structurally, the new *Länder* will be different, at least for a transitional period. The newly emerging political and ideological pluralism that creates the basis of a stable democracy will lack the familiar social diversity of the old *Länder* as well as their post-national moral-cultural system. One example: In eastern Germany, the new entrepreneurial class, which usually forms the bedrock of democratic capitalism, is made up of an alarming proportion of former Communists. Many members of the former political elite have successfully transformed themselves into business leaders after being kicked out of the administration, academia, or former state-owned enterprises. Will a part of this class become a destabilizing factor for democracy?

The West Germans' exit from fascism took the form of "Europeanization." Psychologically, the abandonment of nationalism, and of the traditional concept of the nation-state as well, was the West German way to become Westernized. The formula through which most West Germans recognized themselves was the term "post-national democracy," introduced by one of the most well–known German political scientists, Karl Dietrich Bracher. Both on the left and on the right, patriotism in the form of national pride was replaced by "constitutional

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patriotism," which distanced patriotism from nationalism, and oriented itself to the cosmopolitical values of Western democracy embedded in the Federal Republic's constitution. Western Europe had been identified with peace, reconciliation between former enemies, and a social order founded on the principles of justice and liberty. Germany stood for authoritarianism, two world wars in this century, for nationalism which turned into National Socialism, for terror and repression, and for the crime of the Holocaust. National reunification puts into question the special West German political and ideological construct on which the identity of the Federal Republic was based, its self–perception as a post–national society, a democratic system.

During the forty years of the GDR's existence, national unity and German identity was co-opted by the SED. Oscillating between post–national socialist internationalism, and the concept of the German Democratic Republic as a socialist nation-state, the regime unsuccessfully tried to separate its people from the capitalist West. While West Germans identified "Europe," as the incarnation of the West, their East German counterpart considered the Federal Republic itself symbolic of the values of the democratic and prosperous West. The perceptive French scholar Anne–Marie Le Gloannec puts it in the following way, "In Communist Germany surrounded by the Wall, the Federal Republic became the obsessive measure of all things – acts and ideas. . . . West German images, information, values, and standards invaded East Germany; they nurtured both the culture and the counterculture." East Germans identified "the West" with a nation-state – the Federal Republic. In 1989, when shouting the slogan "Wir sind ein Volk" ("We are one people"), East Germans were not inspired by a backward, anti–democratic nationalism but by liberal – meaning democratic capitalist – and social-democratic ideas which had become the underlying norms of the Federal Republic. Their exit from Communism and longing for Westernization took the form of joining the West German nation-state. These completely different perceptions explain – at least partly – the different attitudes toward the nation-state in both parts of the unified country. In the West, nationalism induces fear of losing the democratic achievements that made the country a Western one. In the East, the nation-state symbolizes belonging to the democratic West.

The resurrection of the concept of the nation-state in the current German debate about national identity is too often and too easily denounced as a reactionary renunciation of the values of the democratic West – both by left-wing intellectuals in Germany and by observers abroad. East Germans are perceived as vehemently anti-American, dismissive of liberal democracy, hostile to anything Western, and contemptu-

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ous of the constitutional patriotism which framed much of the identity of the old Federal Republic's elite. But the contrary is true: it testifies to everything *but* the rebirth of an anti-liberal *Volksgemeinschaft*. The debate is about the alternatives of Westernization: developing liberal democracy in the framework of "Europe," whatever that means, or in the framework of the newly reunited nation-state. These concerns should not be mixed up with the emergence of the so-called post-World War II new nationalist right, which is almost exclusively West German. It harks back to the conservative revolutionaries of the 1920s and the exposure of the values of the West as alien to Germans. Ironically, there is an obvious affinity between the anti–Americanism of the new nationalist right and the left-wing pacifist milieu that has survived the defeat of the early 1980s.

Aside from intellectual minorities, both East and West Germans share a wish for Westernization, not in Bismarck's but in Adenauer's tradition of unambiguous commitment to Western Europe and Western values. In this sense, European integration and transatlantic cooperation remain the core of the German nation-state's *raison d'être*. For the first time in its history, Germany can integrate the values of democracy and national identity within the concept of the nation-state. Liberal democracy and Germanhood can be brought together. The peaceful revolution in East Germany which led to the unification of the country was a defining moment within this process. The national statehood which Germans had first gained by war in 1871, and which they lost as the result of the bloodiest war in European history, was suddenly achieved by a democratic revolution without the force of arms or the spilling of blood. Even if the common German language downgrades the peaceful revolution into a simple turnabout (*Wende*), it established the legitimacy of the new Germany as a result of a revolutionary process in East Germany, in which the entire German people has achieved freedom in peace, joining unanimously the democratic West, and in accordance with its neighbors. With the infusion of East Germans into Germany's traditionally West German foreign policy elite, the self-conscious post-nationalism, both in the form of Europeanism and Atlanticism, is destined to steadily erode. The ongoing debate on the Germans' national identity evidently demonstrates that reunification as a result of a popular revolution is still an occasion for recasting the existing state of the society, thus enabling the Germans to regain national self-consciousness and renewed patriotism. The post-1990 Federal Republic is no longer a form of democratic government for the Germans on European soil. It again has become a nation-state. United Germany is not merely an enlarged version of the

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pre–unification Federal Republic but is about to become dominant in East Central Europe. This will change Europe as a whole more profoundly than the architects of reunification on both sides of the Atlantic intended. Germany will be the dominant Westernized nation-state in the new Europe. The predominance of such a nation-state is not necessarily a cause for concern. In fact, a Germany that openly pursues its national interests in Eastern Europe, the democratization and marketization of the former Communist nations, will be a more reliable and predictable partner for its allies.

Igor Webb: Thank you very much for your fascinating and illuminating talks and comments. Following our format, the panelists should have a chance to briefly discuss with each other, and then we'll open the floor to questions. We've had three particular kinds of emphases: One, the enormity of the past and how both individually and socially one can or cannot cope with it, and the difficulty of doing so. Two, the various uses that the present imposes on the memory that one might or might not have of the past. And finally, the very complex heritages that have made the unification of Germany so complicated.

Margarete Mitscherlich: I must admit that some things have been difficult for me to understand. But I kept thinking, Professor Koch, that you are a bit too optimistic. I wonder whether you can really rely on this Germany, even if it takes time to come together. I believe you said that it was really East Germany which was responsible for a kind of peaceful revolution. But Germany never really had a revolution; that was an illusion. I think that without the breakdown of the Soviet Union there would not have been any breakdown of East Germany either. It was more the impossibility of getting along with the whole capitalist world which led to many other events and to the breakdown of Russian Communism. I think Gorbachev was much more of a force behind the possibility of East Germany having a successful "revolution" than were the East Germans themselves.

Igor Webb: Next.

David Gress: I confine myself to a couple of points to do mostly with Dr. Mitscherlich's paper. In my paper, I expressed great admiration for the method by which you take psychology and expand it to cultural interpretation. I stand by that. However, I want to take issue with another point, Dr. Mitscherlich. You take the individual's psychology, and you interpret how the individual deals with collective or individual memory,

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and then you extrapolate the problems and conditions as causes – which all makes total sense. But I would want to see more feedback between that and society, in other words, the Alexis de Tocqueville model which reflects how the individual shapes society and social values and mores, and how these, in turn, feed back into the individual. I really question this tremendous narcissism and failure to grow up on the part of Germans. Undoubtedly, there were Germans who had this problem, but there were many others who did not. I am questioning this all-or-nothing attitude. Either the Germans are completely unable to feel shame, or they feel excess shame. But there is in fact a middle ground. What Germans are we talking about? To what extent do you, socially and politically, assess this inner damage? I see the consequences as creating an iconic past with which to batter one's enemies over the head. I don't think this is terribly useful psychologically or politically.

My second point: Dr. Mitscherlich concluded by mentioning a very interesting discussion about the *Wehrmacht*, and how people, including veterans like Helmut Schmidt, had difficulty accepting that the *Wehrmacht* was a criminal enterprise. Well, was it? That is a serious question with no predetermined answer. Not every German soldier was either decent or cooperated with the SS. Some were, and some were not. There's a lot of data and evidence to show the breakdown of attitudes, social origins, beliefs and behavior patterns of German soldiers. It is quite obvious that there was a fairly large (but not a majority) hard core of National Socialists in the Army. But many were not. And many joined the Resistance because they saw the SS shooting people, and others did not.

Briefly, to Dr. Koch: I do agree that there is potential ground for optimism, but I would just add that the question has been posed here, "United Germany, threat or asset?" I agree with Burkhardt's predictions, that the German problem of the future, if there is one, will not be German activism but passivity. We should be worrying about Germans failing to pull their weight, not about whether they will be too aggressive, which is a fantasy. Thank you.

Burkhard Koch: Dr. Mitscherlich asks, was there really a revolution? I think if Gorbachev hadn't become the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, it would have taken another fifty or hundred years to come about. It was unimaginable, a couple of years ago, that the Soviet Union would be dissolved peacefully, but I think it was a real revolution. I was raised with Lenin, and I agree with Richard Pipes. They both defined revolution as change of ownership in property, replacement of elites and of the old state structures. That is exactly what

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happened in East Germany. The revolution started from below and has ended up as a revolution from above. It is still in progress; because they lack an elite, the revolutionaries are perceived as West German carpetbaggers.

As to David's description of coming to terms with the debate, and with the past, the circumstances are different, and thus not a repetition of history. After 1945, the German people as a whole has been forced by the allies into de-Nazification, and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Today, a minority of the people, the Eastern Germans, feel forced into de-Communization and coming to terms with its Communist past by their luckier Western compatriots, who are the majority of their own people. At least in the perception of many Eastern Germans, the whole debate is purely instrumental. As David mentioned, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* of the Communist past is "managing" the past in the interest of present-day political purposes. This is a shame, because it puts the blame of having collaborated with the Communist dictatorship only on the Eastern Germans. It avoids a debate about how West Germany dealt with the Communists during the forty years of the existence of the GDR.

Igor Webb: Thank you very much. May I open the floor to comments and questions? Please use the microphone, because we are trying to transcribe the proceedings.

Patrick Kelly: I teach in the History Department at Adelphi. I wanted to address a two-part question to David Gress. If one accepts your notion of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung,* couldn't one say that people like Hillgruber and Nolte were participating in it, and isn't any political situation in any country to some degree over history? The Dreyfus Affair was over whether one accepts the French Revolution or not. Much of American history and politics today is how we deal with the legacy of the Civil War and slavery. So I don't think that the process is unique to Germany, although the German situation was in its way unique in what it had to account for.

David Gress: Yes, if you take overcoming the past in a most general sense, then of course everyone who contributes to the discussion is engaging in that. But in order to make distinctions and make discussion possible, I was focusing on the particular politicization of that exercise and distinguishing therefore between those who want to start by understanding the past through what really happened, motive and morality and so on, versus those who (and I don't think this includes very many

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historians) use an image of the past to bash you over the head with and block politics they don't like. And in Germany this was very easy, because of the enormity of this past. But my point is that talking about enormity all the time obscures the past. There's a contradiction between creating images of the past for the present and actually understanding the past. I think Nolte and Hillgruber were in clumsy ways trying to do that. You can argue with what they said, but I think that it should be beyond question that they had the right to say what they said.

Karl Hyman: I fought in World War II with the American army and was much decorated. I come from a long line of very well-assimilated German Jews who can trace their ancestry back almost to Roman times. I have visited Germany since World War II, and I can tell you, there's good news and bad news. When I was there the last time, I found that the authoritarian Germany mentality has not abated. An order is an order, *Befehl ist Befehl,* right or wrong. It was no problem for the German army, Nazis and non-Nazis, to kill Jews. The Germans made the twentieth century the bloodiest of all time. When I talked to a student assembly in a *Gymnasium,* during the question and answer period, one of the students said, "You talk like a Jew. Marx was a Jew. Litvinov was a Jew, Trotsky was a Jew. You Jews brought Communism." At that time the GDR was still under Russian control. Actually, they went from brown fascism to red fascism. After he finished his speech, I said, "You're wrong. You Germans brought Communism." I explained to him that the Germans brought Communism because the Germans won against Russia in World War I. Very few of us know that. The German general staff knew that Lenin was in Switzerland, in exile. They offered to transport him in a sealed railroad car from Switzerland to St. Petersburg, which later became Leningrad, to start his revolution, which he did, successfully. And he made peace with the Germans at Brest Litost.

The last time I was there, I thought of all the students I went to *Gymnasium* with who are gone, missing, except for one, a local pharmacist. I visited him and asked him what he did during World War II. He was on the Russian Front. I told him, "You're lucky you're here." "Yes, very lucky." "How come you wound up on the Russian front?" "Well, when the Russians attacked us. . . ." This goes to show that Nazi propaganda, Nazi debris, is still on their brains.

Igor Webb: Would anyone like to comment?

David Gress: It's hard to respond to your feeling, but if the mentality

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has not changed, why are there no death camps in Germany today?

Karl Hyman: The only reason is the guilty conscience of the world, which allowed the creation of Israel.

David Gress: That's probably true.

Charles Krutoff: I'm a psychologist. My question is addressed mostly to Dr. Mitscherlich. I believe there are national characteristics. It seems to me that Germany had a paranoid episode, and it assumed the power paranoid people usually believe they have. The German military, which had the actual strength, was able to realize that power. And it exercised it as a paranoid does. The German Nazis killed their imagined enemies, the Jews, five or six million of them; they killed twenty million Russians as well as many Allied soldiers, as a result of this paranoia. Now, my question has to do with the prognosis, which to a large extent depends on the recognition of the guilt. Guilt to a certain extent is civilizing. Without the development of the superego, the agency that governs guilt, there would not be the kind of civilization that we have today. The question is, will this guilt be recognized and addressed by the current generation of Germans? If guilt to a large extent is being denied, if there is no recognition but denial, this subtle, underlying, fermenting paranoia that exists in a portion of the German people, then what is the prognosis?

Margarete Mitscherlich: It's a very difficult question to answer. Indeed, ours was the bloodiest century since human beings have existed. One must say, too, thatthe exhibition in Hamburg proves that even if not all of us were Nazis, almost no one really resisted when told to do something – kill the Jews, kill the Russians. They did what they were told. But why? The question of guilt covers wide territory. My analyst, an emigré from Hungary, Michael Balint, often told me to be careful with making people feel guilty. They react paranoically. Why they become so would really be a very interesting question. But if you have a strong superego, and do all you are told to do, you can't tolerate normal guilt feelings; you can't even differentiate between healthy and unhealthy guilt feelings.

So the Germans became paranoid when told to do this and that, that if you don't do it, you are guilty of going against your nation. Under a totally paranoid Führer, they became paranoid, and out of this paranoia they were able to do things no other people ever did. So, what is the prognosis? One side wants the Germans to accept their past

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and to find out why these upstanding people became the cruelest, the most pathological beings we have seen. We have to tell them to tolerate and accept guilt, that we have the most horrible history but not to evade looking at this history. To find out why. That would mean to find out how to get along with guilt feelings, finding out what kind of guilt feelings are appropriate and what kind are absolutely inappropriate. The prognosis would be to be in contact with Germans, to make them as international as possible; to find out what one can do to make it possible for these superego-perverted people to tolerate their guilt feelings. Because if they can't, they are only looking at themselves. As it is, they have to fight these guilt feelings and consequently have no feelings for others. These feelings take all their energy. They can't really be humane to people who are different from them. Individual psychology can help us to find out something about national psychology.

Diane MacMullan: I'm in the Department of Music, and I just wanted to offer a tip for those of you interested in what one author referred to as the soft revolution of 1989. There's a little-known museum in Leipzig. It's been set up in the old *Stasi* building, by the former opponents of the *Stasi*. There I think you would get an idea of what was happening in Leipzig in 1989.

Igor Webb: I think we have time for three more questions, but please be brief.

Victor Brightberg: I'm a former survivor of the concentration camps, Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and finally liberated in Terezín. My question is about guilt. I know while I'm alive nobody can face me and say it didn't happen. But I have a feeling that within the next twenty-five years Germany will start releasing papers in order to demonstrate that they were only obeying the will of the people whose countries they occupied, in a sense, with the help of the Poles, the Lithuanians, the Russians. That the French Vichy government helped them. And truly, Anne Frank was not turned in by a German but by a Dane. So the easiest way to get rid of guilt is to blame someone else. I encountered this after I was liberated, when I was hunting for Germans and hoping I would find some SS. When I did confront one, he said, "I am not a Nazi." History will be rewritten, and the blame for what they committed will be put on other people.

John Carney: I am Adelphi's oldest freshman. Let me personalize my

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question a little bit, because it may make it plainer, to me at least. I was two years old when the United States dropped the bomb on Hiroshima and on Nagasaki. I don't believe that what we did was wrong but if I did, am I hearing that I am supposed to feel guilty about that?

Margarete Mitscherlich: Well, you shouldn't feel personally guilty, but you are living in this country, responsible in some sense for what happens. When I think of all the people killed in Hiroshima, I can't help but feel guilty. What are we doing with our guilt, historical guilt, historical responsibility? What are you doing with your guilt feelings? We shouldn't ward them off, we should say, "Why do we feel guilty?" We should try to be guilty when looking at people who have been treated in such an inhumane way.

John Carney: Well, I appreciate your response, even though I don't agree with it. One other comment: I understand that what the Germans did was a terrible thing. What I don't understand is why when the Russians killed millions and millions of people, or when the Turks or when anybody else did those things, it was not a terrible thing. That somehow what the Germans did was unique. I have difficulty grasping what the uniqueness of that was.

Igor Webb: Would anybody like to try answering?

David Gress: That of course is the big question we're all wondering about. I think it's partly because more was expected from Germans, a civilized people, therefore their fall was greater. I think that has a lot to do with the "uniqueness" argument. My mind is not made up, but I understand what both sides are saying, and I think to understand why they're saying what they're saying is part of your answer.

Igor Webb: I think this will come up again in the next few days.

Bernice Tanenbaum: I'm a New York City public schoolteacher. I do believe that there is such a thing as applying individual psychology to group psychology. I have observed a psychological classroom geography, which is a microcosm of the world. There are depressed children, there are aggressive children, there are friendly children, there are paranoid children, and they very rarely change. I would say that if we were to identify Germany in my classroom with a particular childhood personality, it would be identifiable with the aggressive child. It may be paranoid. We should examine again Germany's childhood. One of the things

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I see today that shows me that Germany has not changed was the publicity only a month or so ago regarding Dresden, saying how Germany blamed us for the bombing of Dresden.

Igor Webb: The first session and the questions it has raised shows the emotional nature of these issues, whether one can indeed dispassionately and rationally look at a past as charged as this one, and whether from that past one could achieve a single, democratic, liberal strand in the new Germany. I'm sure these questions will be further pursued. Let's have a ten-minute break, and we'll resume at twelve noon. Thank you so much.

Session Two: History and Current Perceptions of Germany

Edith Kurzweil: Welcome to this session of our conference. So far, we have been presented with a wealth of material. And there is more to come from our next speakers. Now I will begin by introducing all three speakers. We have first, Dr. Christian Fleck. He is Professor of Sociology at the University of Gratz, has been a Schumpeter Fellow at Harvard, and has a number of impressive publications. He will give us "A View From Austria." Next to him is Dr. Karola Brede, Professor of Sociology at the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe University in Frankfurt. She has written many books on social-psychological topics and has been a researcher for many years with the Mitscherlichs at the Sigmund Freud Institute, also in Frankfurt. She will present "A View from Frankfurt." Next to her is Dr. Annie Cohen-Solal, who has been French Cultural Attaché in New York for several years, following the publication of her best-selling biography of Sartre. Her comments will focus on "A View from France. Can History Repeat Itself?" We'll start out with Christian Fleck. Everyone will speak for twenty minutes, and we will follow the same format as before.

Christian Fleck: The relationship between Austrians and Germans is a complex one. It is multi-dimensional and biased on both sides due to

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historical experiences. The German tendency to dominate, and the reaction to this domination by the Austrians, has been of central importance. Ever since 1866, when Prussia defeated the Hapsburg army, the Austrians have been the underdogs. From the battle of Königgrätz until the end of the Third Reich, Germans defined what was right and what was wrong in politics, military affairs, and the economy. Austrians developed independently only in the cultural sphere. Thus, Austria's politicians and its economic elite have suffered from a kind of inferiority complex – a typical Viennese term – resulting in an over-adaptation on the one hand and rough rebellion against big brother on the other. For a long time Germany was a threat to the Austrians, but I think that neither today nor in the future will Germany retain such an influence on Austria. Nevertheless it is relevant to remember the "longue durée" in mentalities to understand the odd relations between Austria and Germany.

As long as the former GDR existed, Austrians had a good chance at minimizing Germany's visible influence on Austrian matters. Secretly, Austrians welcomed the German division with malicious glee. Therefore the existence of the GDR offered the Austrians a chance to disengage themselves from the overwhelming embrace of the West Germans, and Austria's neutrality provided a reason for doing so. After nearly half a century, the independent development of both states has become irreversible, and Austrians developed a feeling of security about their own identity, their separate role in European history, and recently within the politics of the European Union.

Behind the diplomatic center stage the Austrians continue to play a different game. On the front stage they welcome West Germans as tourists; they are pleased that West Germany offers jobs to more than half a million Austrian guest-workers; and that West German networks' production of dubbed adaptations of American movies and television series serve the whole German-speaking audience. Backstage, they despise the Germans because they are wealthier, are better soccer players, still retain their Prussian attitudes, and are terrible cooks. In comparison to the West Germans, the East Germans were less threatening to the Austrians. They were poor, dirty, and imprisoned. For the first time the defeated Austrians were able to offer help to Germans.

First there was an export of people from Austria to the former GDR. For instance, the composer of East Germany's national anthem, Hanns Eisler, was not only born in Vienna but remained an Austrian citizen until his death (and he more than once fled from East Berlin to Vienna to escape official attacks). The most famous East German poet, Bertolt Brecht, became an Austrian citizen before he decided to settle in East Berlin accompanied by his Viennese born wife, Helene Weigel.

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During the early fifties several other artists and scholars, who had lost their jobs in Vienna due to their Communist affiliation, also went to the GDR. Austria also made personnel contributions to the *Stasi* system. Former Austrian volunteers in Spain's Civil War became employees of the military and secret service of the GDR.

Finally, after the collapse of the GDR-regime an export in the other direction took place. To my knowledge only one Austrian citizen cleared a profit from former SED money. A Viennese woman was victorious against the *Treuhandanstalt,* the official trustee of the former SED economic empire. But I am sure she didn't collect this money for herself. She has been one of the leading fronts of the Austrian Communist Party, and Austria's Communist Party was one of the closest allies of the former SED. So one could assume that the successor party *Partei des demokratischen Sozialismus* (PDS) received kickbacks and secret transfers.

Besides these more individual or party-related dealings, there was an informative, but widely unrecognized, structural similarity between the two states: The end of the GDR state shows a similar social dynamic to the voluntary self-destruction of Austria's First Republic. In 1938, most Austrians welcomed Nazi Germany's Führer as liberator on the *Heldenplatz*. The same euphoric mood was evident when Chancellor Kohl visited East Germany in 1989-90. The masses celebrated him as the guarantor of a better future. They primarily expected better economic conditions - jobs in the first case and participation in consumerism in the latter. I think that in both cases the "liberty" the masses expected was not the liberty of the civil society. This was obvious in the *Anschluss* situation but also clear in the GDR case, when only a few opted for freedom of thought and political participation. Within a couple of years both peoples learned their lessons. But at the beginning they expected better incomes, more social welfare, and the cancellation of debts. The nationalistic rhetoric functioned only as a decoration. Of course there are important differences between the Third Reich and the Federal Republic, but what I want to refer to is the dimension of public mentalities and not the constitution or the structure of the sociopolitical system. I do not want to exaggerate the analogy, but it seems to me that there is a structural affinity among the German-speaking countries in coping with societal and economic problems.

The period of formation of the nation-state in the German-speaking part of Europe was characterized by a problem-solving habit which can be described as "externalization." Whenever serious internal problems arose in one of the German-speaking countries, they looked for causes outside their own society to explain the difficulties: the treaties of Ver-

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sailles and Saint Germain appeared as an unfair imposition by the victorious nations. The viability of Austria's First Republic was destroyed by the successor states in revenge. The Great Depression was successfully transformed into a Jewish conspiracy by the National Socialists. The end of Austria's First Republic was presented as an occupation by foreign forces – an attitude that spread admittedly only after the euphoric honeymoon. The end of World War II was a victory of wealthier nations. Later on, the building of the Berlin Wall was necessary in order to prevent an invasion of the aggressive capitalistic forces.

The same pattern of explanation that was applied to single historical events was used to make plausible the whole National Socialist regime in Austria. Austria's post-war elite cultivated a view of the Nazi past as a military occupation by a foreign force: The weak and small country in the heart of Europe was destroyed by Prussian militarism; the German National Socialists subdued the innocent Austrians and made them involuntarily part of the *Grossdeutsches Reich* and pressed them as soldiers into the *Wehrmacht*. After the unconditional surrender of the Third Reich, Austrians sought their way back to their roots. Christian Democrats and, ironically, Austria's Communists worked hard to create an independent Austrian nation. The school administration banned German as a school language for a while and invented a new language called "instruction language" (something like a predecessor of political correctness); Austrian patriots created a genealogy of cultural heritage going back to the Middle Ages and tried to disconnect the links to German culture wherever possible. Within only a few years the language in use had changed considerably, as some returning former Austrians noted with astonishment. I think Austrians misinterpreted the process of nation-building as a voluntary effort by disconnecting not only political links but also cultural relations. Naturally the economic connections with Germany were restored after a few years of forced separation. Up to now, the Austrian economy has been dependent on German business cycles; Austria's monetary policy follows Germany's; and the Alps still remain Germans' preferred vacation resort.

Given this attitude, it is not surprising that official Austria hasn't felt obliged to pay reparations to victims of National Socialism, especially to former Austrian Jews. Austria itself was the "first victim," and one victim cannot have obligations to other victims. Apart from all the disgusting details of postwar history, the main strategy again was externalization of internally produced contradictions. In the time of the Cold War-competition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, Austrians were able to develop a sort of national consciousness and national identity – fragile in

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the beginning but with increasing confidence. Surprisingly, within about thirty years Austrians have been successful in creating an independent Austrian nation, historically unknown and hardly understandable to the generations of the parents and grandparents. The mere existence of two German states, I would guess, has been most helpful. When, in the early eighties, a German historian proposed a new formula for discussing the relations among the three German-speaking countries – three states, two nations, one culture – only Austria's professional historians felt provoked.

The GDR used a similar strategy in coping with the Nazi past. In their picture of history, the moving force was the capitalistic system that created the Nazi dictatorship as its last bastion of defense. The most aggressive, the most militaristic, and the most exploitative part of monopoly capital decided, consciously, to hand over the executive force to a party of adventurers. Finally, the oppressed working class expelled the oligarchy with the help of the Red Army. The brave fighters for the liberation of the oppressed didn't seem to feel any moral obligation to get rid of the collective past of Nazism. The argument ran similarly to the classical syllogism: Capitalism causes fascism; socialism is the opposite of capitalism. Consequently, if the GDR is on the way to socialism, it has nothing to do with fascism.

It seems clear that both of these successor states saw affinities to each other. As early as possible, they established diplomatic relations and intensified economic exchange. As an irony of history, Austria, heir to the overly heavy industry of the Third Reich, built iron and steel factories in the former GDR to cope with world market problems in steel and iron. The former Hermann Göring factory in Adolf Hitler's hometown of Linz sold factory components to the GDR's newly erected industrial area in Eisenhüttenstadt. On the other hand, the GDR's political elite utilized Austria as an opportunity to overcome its own isolation.

Looking at the Federal Republic and its strategy for coping with the Nazi past, one has to acknowledge that it was the only successor state of the Third Reich that tried to seek the reasons and causes for the rise of the Nazi dictatorship inside their own social structure and historical development. Whatever one might criticize about the Federal Republic of Germany, one has to appreciate the strong effort that was made in the Western part of Germany after some years of agony. Germany's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* resulted in opening the political and cultural attitudes to standards of Western democracy. The strategy of internalization was undoubtedly successful in dealing with the Nazi past, but problems arose when the West Germans utilized this strategy in connection with its eastern part.

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Three interrelated failures occurred: first, West Germans underestimated the depth of cultural differences between themselves and the so-called *Ossis,* the Easterners. Plainly, the citizens of the former GDR didn't feel guilty about their past. Each individual had tried to adapt to an autocratic system that wasn't able to produce enough wealth for its citizens. Partly that adaptation required co-operation with the authorities, denunciation, and fraud, but as far as we can judge, every citizen of the GDR was in the same situation. Their behavior in relation to the autocratic regime was similar to the well-known German authoritarian past. When government control over the people was loosened, they reacted similarly to the time of the *Biedermeier* – retreated to family life and nonpolitical communication with close friends.

Second, a false historical analogy has been drawn. A relevant segment of opinion leaders in East and West handled the SED regime in terms of the Nazi past. A search for murderers and tortureres took place, but the number of murderers was not as high as during the Nazi time. East German society was not a democracy, but it was not a totalitarian dictatorship in the strict sense. While Nazi Germany was a power of its own, the GDR was only a satellite of the Soviet Union. While Nazi Germany intended to rule all of Europe and initiated World War II, the GDR seemed to be a peaceful state, at least when compared to the former one. And finally, extermination didn't happen during the forty years of the German Democratic Republic.

Opinion leaders and functionaries thought about the past in terms of moral obligation. The readiness to confess, familiar in a Protestant culture, was transformed into a bureaucratic ceremony after 1989. The opening of the *Stasi* files led to a social condition that is virtually untenable: a society in which everyone knows everything about everyone cannot work. Secrets, concealments, ignorance, and simple lack of knowledge are prerequisites of public social life. Coping with a problematic collective past by uncovering the failures in every citizen destroys the cement of society. Apart from the false confidence in the validity of bureaucratic, routine bookkeeping, the failure was also due to the confusion of personal guilt and shame with society's responsibility for its own history.

Official Austria and Austria's citizens and opinion makers did not show much interest in the unification process and the moral cleansing ceremonies after 1990. I think there are two explanations. On the one side, a Catholic culture like the Austrian one is not interested in public confessions. In a universe where every Sunday sins are being forgiven, evil does not accumulate. On the other hand, Austrians have always been

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quite satisfied when their German relatives were occupied with themselves. For a long time, critical Austrians have been afraid of the economic expansion of West German firms into Austria – the proportion of German ownership in Austria is very high. Nowadays they feel satisfied to see that German industry is busy reconstructing Germany's East and has no time and no money to expand to Austria.

Looking to the future, I think two crucial questions arise: First, will unified Germany be able to handle the problem of nationalism in a peaceful manner? Second, would unified Germany be willing to restrict its influence on neighbors in the east and southeast to non-dominating matter? I think there is no reason to believe that Germany cannot achieve both of these goals. But we must remember what we have learned in the last few years: that is, to be cautious about making historical prophecies.

Edith Kurzweil: Thank you very much. Karola Brede.

Karola Brede: In the 1980s, the Federal Republic of Germany was considered one of the most powerful nations. Less unwilling to be involved than during the sixties and seventies, it took on many responsibilities and participated in political activities that were to contribute to the stability of the world order. Within Europe the FRG was an influential political and economic power. It took part in the process of joining other European nations, that is, the Economic Community (EC). This is the historical context of the unification, a historical turn which was advanced by political movements and led to the breakdown of the GDR. It also included a shift of attention to internal affairs and at the same time encouraged political forces, especially conservative ones, to view Germany as a world power even more so than they had before.

In 1990, most Germans, I think, did not doubt that the Federal Republic would be capable of solving the immense economic problems stemming from instituting a capitalist economy within the Eastern part of Germany, which had had a planned economy. Chancellor Kohl's promise of "flourishing landscapes" in the East, formulated relatively early in the process of unification, is an expression of this optimism. In the East, one might have anticipated that production would almost come to a standstill and that mass unemployment would result. In the West, one could foresee a decline in consumption levels as well as other economic dangers. But no one seriously doubted that in the long run both parts of Germany would fuse economically, and that this fusion would be followed by a social integration resulting from the pressure on people to think and act in terms of market mechanisms.

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Insofar as we limit ourselves to economics, the process of unification seems to be successful. In the new states the volume of production is increasing and unemployment decreasing. It would be wrong, though, to assume that all the socio-economic problems have been solved, since while some are, others remain hidden. Among these is the difference in social benefits between the West and the East which is lessened through financial subsidies; in favorable credit facilities, in measures to lower unemployment, and in all kinds of financial contributions which exist in the German welfare state.

The major problem concerns collective political identity, which amounts to more than the ability to mobilize the economy. For national political identity emerges from citizens' adherence to a nation's constitution, among other things, and from active participation in the democratic process – by solving conflicts through institutionalized means. And political identity reflects the history of a nation. Consequently, as long as the process of unification proceeds from the assumption that solving economic problems will induce a lessening of the East-West differences in the political, social, and cultural realms, it is one-sided. But in fact, the problems resulting from differences of taken-for-granted realities, values, and attitudes, and of the representations of history, are being treated without concern for the emotions and intentions of the citizens of the former East Germany. Here, I am limiting myself to the representation of the period of National Socialism in the individual's mind and to the collective concept of self. The fact that political identity is so closely derived from economic well-being, it seems, contributes to a particularly irrational manner of dealing with the National Socialist past which, in turn, may encourage the development of right extremist activities – a problem in East as well as West Germany.

In this context, it is important to be aware of the following facts.

National Socialism and its crimes went beyond what we are able to imagine. It was the last period of history to which the peoples of the former GDR and the old FRG can and must relate – some of us still through our own experience. Only a few years after this period ended, two irreconciliably antagonistic social systems were established which corresponded to the old world order of a Western and an Eastern bloc.

The GDR was founded on the idea that the National Socialist regime had to be removed and replaced by a socialist society which was anti-fascist and would extinguish National Socialism at its roots. But the GDR was less successful in fulfilling this promise than its state declared. It developed its own post-fascist syndrome and conveyed non-democratic traditions related to it. But little is known about the manner in which this syndrome was expressed.

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The FRG also perpetuated snondemocratic traditions insofar as it claimed to be the successor of the German nation, when demanding reunification. While the Social Democrats were in power, these politics were somewhat attenuated, when they promoted the acceptance of the existence of two German states. These politics helped them obtain the majority of the population's votes. But since 1989, the parliamentary left has had to grapple with the reproach that what they had considered an illusion, namely, the reunification of Germany, had become a social and political reality. Today, the left is confronted with the question of whether the political identity of its members, which almost always viewed current political structures in a skeptical fashion and was anti-nationalistic, had been deficient.

Deeply rooted attitudes and dispositions founded on unconscious identifications and imaginings survived the process of exchanging political power: the establishment of a constitutional state; economic and ideological integration of West Germany into the Western world; and trials aimed at recivilizing German society. But there is a gap between the institutional outer world with democratic institutions and procedures, and the psycho-social inner world of everyday life, family, and socialization. This sphere was not affected by the decreed, almost administratively induced, change of the political system after 1945.

The tremendous effort to deny and de-realize the National Socialist past was expressed in a limited perception of the political as such, and in an apolitical mentality and lack of political participation. An excessive consumerism corresponded to this political apathy. These three aspects - National Socialism as the last period all Germans shared; the anti-fascism of the German Democratic Republic; and the de-realization of National Socialism in the Federal Republic - have to be taken into account when examining the political strategies of the German state, while coping with the economic, social, and cultural exigencies emerging from the process of unification. Because unification resulted from the internal decay and disintegration of the GDR's socialist system, the Western world, especially the FRG, automatically assumed a position of superiority. But this was not backed by political legitimation. However, the FRG is acting as a political power and only reluctantly concedes to the citizens of the former GDR the space to move from their political past to the present.

This factor intrudes into the behavior of *Wessis* towards *Ossis* in every detail. And in that sense, the *Ossies'* feelings that they have been "annexed" is not exaggerated. Moreover, these attitudes are not conducive to political discourse, and thus political opinion in unified Germany is drifting to the right.

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The manner in which the many problems posed by unification were handled over the last five years brings to mind the earlier damage done to the construction of political consciousness and judgment. In part, this is a result of chronically ignoring the Nazi past. Now that the division of Germany has ended, we are reluctant to discuss our political identity and whether or not it is reasonable to negate this identity as Germans. For political identity in a unified Germany implies relating to National Socialism as the last shared period of German history.

In the former FRG, continuity with this period was denied, and favored instead political identity based on Germany as an economic nation, which included an explicit attitude of reluctance and indifference towards political institutions. Habermas alludes to this as the "nationalism of the German mark." He cites the historian Hans Mommsen, who in the early eighties stated that Germans, instead of expressing national pride, avoid the central theme of their history, aggressively remove the East from their perception, and are eager to adapt Western values and life styles. And they are proud of their economic achievements. Shortly after the historical turn, Germans probably would have recognized themselves when their relation to the process of unification was described as pragmatic, oriented towards facts, down-to-earth and rational. In itself, this description does not sound negative. It implies what Ralf Dahrendorf noted from his British perspective, namely, that the Germans of the West did not react with hurrah patriotism to unification. If we consider, however, that this behavior is built on decades of denial and de-realization of history veiling the continuity of National Socialism, the view of this behavior changes. It can then be interpreted as an unacknowledged mistrust stemming from the effects of the mass psychology during National Socialism. As long as the relationship between skepticism and historical experience remains unconscious, it will contribute to the lack of political identity.

These elements of political identity, however, lend constancy to the collective self as an economic nation. But insofar as these elements allow us to deal with the past, they are not appropriate to dealing with the National Socialist heritage the former GDR left to its children. For this heritage contains a post-fascist syndrome about which only little is known. The centralizing similarities between the regimes of National Socialism and the GDR allowed for the identification of the GDR with the National Socialist state because, among other things, entire sections of the population were being controlled by fear of denunciation. If one assumes that, on the psychological level, emotionally distant rationality favors collective denial, the question arises as to how such veiled fear can be transformed into a collective a behavior that both East and West

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Germans might share.

The potential to come to grips with the psychological problems brought about by unification is low. In the West one can observe uncertainties of political judgment and a shift to the political right. The political left is devalued. There are many aspects of individual identity crises which indicate that the negative identification with oneself as German influences the manner in which societal problems should be coped with. To expect that the Western economy was capable of integrating the population of the former GDR socially and culturally is, at least in part, erroneous. Western economics and Eastern values, such as justice, solidarity, and morale, emphatically clashed in a confrontation whose dynamics remain unresolved.

There is much difference between the National Socialist period which all Germans shared and the period during which East Germany constituted, within the Communist bloc, a political system on the basis of socialist values and a centralist state with a social structure of relatively low complexity. These two periods become one period when, as a consequence of economic preferences, the differences are leveled. Thus, the rest is open to irrational influences. In this sense, the Eastern part of Germany has to carry alone the burden of a past which both share.

Indications of crisis in the West, especially fear of disadvantages and impoverishment, and indications of crisis in the East, especially disappointment with devalued ideals, constitute a common basis. This basis generates non-rational patterns of reaction which have become a subject for international attention. But attempts to find the roots of right extremism in the East while declaring its manifestations in the West to be a sort of contagion have been proven wrong.

Right-wing extremism is characterized by attitudes, activities and violence towards the weak and defenseless sectors of the population. The beliefs of right extremists are symbolized in National Socialist phrases and emblems. Their ability to provoke demonstrations is based on identification with a period of history that was denied and de-realized – in the East as much as in the West. Anti-Semitism and the marginalization of ethnic groups and non-Germans represent latent fascist roots. The proneness to National Socialist attitudes was repressed in both societies. But they did not lose their explosiveness. I expect that right extremism will remain our steady companion and will produce its own fellow travelers, as long as Germans are not able to explore their relationship to their guilt. However, unless we build a political identity as Germans, we might not ever learn to cope with our past on rational grounds.

Annie Cohen-Solal: I am going to speak about the view from France

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of the reunification of Germany. First of all, I want to thank Edith for offering me an opportunity to think about what I am working on now, cultural representations. Basically, I am working on the United States and France, although I am pleased to also have the opportunity today to think of the relationship between France and Germany. This brings me back to the beginning of the 1970s, when I was a professor in Berlin and first noticed how little the French knew about Germany. France and Germany belonged to two totally different cultural worlds, and I was amazed, for example, to have to read Rosa Luxemburg, Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin, and many of the Frankfurt School writers in German, as their works were not yet translated into French.

The French perception of the reunification of Germany also is based on this lack of real knowledge. France and Germany have contrasting histories. France has always had a very strong central administration, and in France there have been continuous dynasties, whereas in Germany there were lots of ruptures. Since the Middle Ages, the liberation of the German state came about through the process of *Sonderweg,* a process not shared by other Occidental countries. The dismantling of central power in Germany took place at the same time that French central power increased. In fact, François the Second declared the German state dead, and Napolean did so as well.

German reunificiation and German power were at the center of the French debates after November 1989. It was a major question for French intellectuals. French representations of Germany consist of a vision of two Germanies, which are not East Germany and West Germany but old Germany and young Germany. The old Germany, the one that the French seem to favor, is an old respectable country, with an old tradition and an old culture of cosmopolitanism. The other Germany they refer to is a young nation moved by the irrepressibility of power and blood. And as General de Gaulle wrote in *France and Its Military Power,* in 1938, Germany remains Germany. In a country motivated by so many repressed passions, moderation never lasts.

To the French, Germany has been a country marked forever, a country that could never recuperate from its stigmatization. Therefore, the reunification of Germany was to be totally avoided. It was frightening, terrorizing, according to the head of the French Communist Party, George Marchais. In February 1990, he stated that a large Germany would mean the defeat of France; it would be the second military power after the Soviet Union. It put the future of France into question. We needed a big debate. The French people had to give their opinion about what this would mean for our country. We hoped also that the

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Germans would find a way that differed from the bellicose way of the Third Reich. The French had many problems in dealing with Germany, first of all because the French population would be much smaller than that of a reunified Germany. On the economic level, the French neighbor might not be able to compete. The second image is the representation of a country which needs re-education, under specific conditions. Also, Germany remains the hereditary enemy, the one that reminds us of the period after the defeat in the war of 1870. Until 1914, Alsace-Lorraine was annexed to Germany, without consultation. The other attitude in this process of reeducation is the purification of Germany. Germany is seen as a country which is not noble. Because it is outside of the norms, it has to become exemplary; and it has to prove to the other nations and to itself that it has ridden itself of the old ghosts, that it is strongly anchored in values of humanitarianism, human rights, and democracy. The third attitude in the reeducation process is that Germany should follow the universalist goals of the French. It should be controlled, to avoid becoming too powerful. Germany's foreign policy should be controlled by the European Economic Community (EEC) – as de Gaulle sometimes used to wish.

Next to the image of a marked country, Germany is perceived as a mature country. The French also seem to perceive France and Germany as complementary and thus needing a common *Aussenpolitik*. That was, for example, the view of the Elysée when the two governments were ready to consult each other before making decisions on foreign policy, and more particularly, on questions of common interest in order to gain as similar positions as possible. Therefore, they advocate complementarity of interest and a real partnership. As François Mitterrand said in 1990 in Munich, when he met with Helmut Kohl after the fall of the Berlin Wall: "I want to tell the German people again and again, that all our wishes for them at this moment of their history are full of emotion, full of memories, and full of hopes." The link Mitterrand tried to build with Kohl is indeed a strong one. He also said, "Our two countries will go on to become a real force for the building of Europe." This link is perceived on the level of monetary and foreign policy, as well as on social issues. Most of the French voices talked about a policy between France and Germany against unemployment. According to Michel Rocard, when he was president of the Socialist Party in 1994: "The European Community must recognize that it is responsible for the relations among populations, for fighting against unemployment. We need a common aim between Germany and France to achieve this." Other observations were less measured, such as when Jean-Marie Le Pen

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of the Front National compared the issue of Turkish immigration in Germany to that of Arab immigration in France. What is interesting in this respect is that both French politicians in the right-wing parties and in the Socialist Party seem to have these more or less closed attitudes. As Jacques Baron, a minister from the center, remarked of what he called the renaissance of the French-German Pact: "The only way to manage and build a new Europe is in a very strong partnership between France and Germany, a partnership which will be blossoming and bright. The challenge is immediate. France and Germany will be in charge of presiding over the EEC; the two nations have an historical role in this respect." The French and German governments have to show by interacting with each other that they can handle social, political, and economic issues.

Let me conclude. Today there are only a few weeks left before the French presidential elections, and as you might know, in France before presidential elections, during presidential elections, and after presidential elections, you keep talking about them. Now that we are close, the candidate who seems to be doing best in the polls is Jacques Chirac. But no matter what the position of the three candidates, Giscard, Jospin, and Chirac, they seem to share a position on Germany, to maintain their leadership of Europe. The French are still holding on to a kind of paternalistic attitude towards Germany. We talk about it as we do about a citizen who has fallen into disgrace. I think no one should be surprised that the French are handling the reunification of Germany in terms of ethics, because ethics, as you know, are essential in French politics. And I would sum up by saying that what perhaps symbolizes how the French perceive the new Germany is the imminent "wrapping" of the Reichstag by the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude, which I am sure will be a very powerful gesture.

Edith Kurzweil: First, I want to thank all of the panelists. I also would like to remind the audience that we are conducting our discussions in English, which for a number of our panelists is not their native language. We can imagine how difficult this would be for us, were we in their position.

We have touched on many issues, on the repercussions and perceptions related to personal experience, to political events and actions, to handling political issues through political means. The interpretation of all of these things, the various dialectics among them, individual representations of self and the mind, and finally the cultural representations by France, Germany's oldest or shall we say most related-to neighbor – not usually in a most friendly fashion. Now we'll open the discussions, and

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have you ask the participants what you'd like to know. Please state your name first.

Karl Hyman: I'd like to comment about Austria and France. Obviously the rewriting of history by presenting Austria as a victim is pure nonsense. The most vicious Nazis starting with Hitler, Kaltenbrunner, Eichmann, even Seyss-Inquart, came from Austria. Waldheim, who of course hid it quite successfully for some time, was a super-Nazi. Dollfuss was murdered by the Nazis. Schuschnigg was more or less held captive in Berchtesgaden until he surrendered and handed Austria over to Seyss-Inquart. He became the Austrian Benedict Arnold, and went on to become the governor of Holland. The famous Austrian of Jewish descent whom we remember was the founder of Zionism, Theodor Herzl.

Edith Kurzweil: Could you turn this into a question, please?

Karl Hyman: The question is, how does Austria justify its anti-Semitism compared to Germany?

Christian Fleck: The notion of the first victim is derived from the declaration between the three allies in 1943 in Moscow, and all Austrian politicians of the Second Republic, after World War II, referred to this expression, which came out of the Nazi legacy. So it is part of the official policy of Austria to declare itself as the first victim. You are right, it is nonsense to hang onto this as an historical view of Austria's past. But I meant to clarify that there is a difference between the Austrians' non-coping with their past and, in my opinion, the Federal Republic's having reasonably copied with their past. Obviously, I haven't been very successful.

Edith Kurzweil: Thank you.

Karl Hyman: As to France: it delivered seventy-five percent of its Jews to the Nazis under the Vichy government of Petain. France has a history of anti-Semitism, going back to the Dreyfus Affair. What you say about Germany and France today just doesn't make sense. There is no way that the Germans will collaborate to please the French. France has had part of German-speaking Alsace Lorraine since World War I. De Gaulle, who was to save the honor of France in World War II, was again in favor of a treaty of shame à la the Treaty of Versailles. Luckily, Harry Truman

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didn't go along and put in the Marshall Plan to help rebuild Germany. How can France today justify its policies during the Nazi occupation when it collaborated so wholeheartedly?

Annie Cohen-Solal: I don't really understand the aggressive tone of your question. But there's a lot of emotion in this room. In any event, you cannot talk about everything in twenty minutes. I do agree with you that the way the French police behaved on the orders of German police during the German occupation was absolutely unbelievable. I even organized a conference about that last December, with the journalist who has written about Mitterrand's years in the Vichy government. No, the French have not come to terms with the way their collaborators acted during the German occupation. And it is unthinkable that a Socialist French president had been so involved in the Vichy government, received a medal from Petain, and then became friendly with Bousquet, the Minister of Jewish Affairs in Vichy France. He not only became friendly with him, he even invited him to the Elysée when he became president. And until Bousquet was killed two years ago, nobody knew exactly what it was about. In fact, Bousquet was asked by the German police to deliver twenty thousand foreign Jews to the German police. Bousquet did more than fulfill the requests of the German police; he also delivered French Jewish women and children. This is the most horrible event in French history. It took place in July 1942, and Bousquet was judged in the trials after the liberation of France. He was condemned but subsequently acquitted. He became a businessman, a very powerful banker. He financed many campaigns in the southwest, among them the campaign of President Mitterrand. So here we are. The French. We have not finished dealing with our past. We are full of nightmares about our collaboration with the German occupation. We also have to confront the way we dealt with the war in Algeria. Since this war occurred twenty years after the end of the liberation, this made it even worse. We cannot get over it. So that's my answer.

David Rosenberg: My question is for Mr. Fleck. The last time a powerful united Germany dominated Europe was of course the Nazi era, and Austria was absorbed into that state. A new powerful Germany is likely to be the dominant power in Europe in the future. You said little about the fact that the Austrians had rather appreciated the division in Germany between East and West because it opened up a role for Austria. What kind of role do you see for Austria now, particularly with regard to the southern Slavic regions which at one time were part of the Hapsburg Empire?

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Christian Fleck: Some Austrian politicians see a role for the former Hapsburg monarchy. I do not share that opinion. I think there is no place and no role for Austria outside its boundaries. A couple of weeks ago, Austria became a member of the European Union, one of fifteen members. Domestically, there are a lot of problems, though small ones, compared to those of Germany. Austrian politicians, Austrian intellectuals and academics are in favor of developing an accurate historical image of Austria. But this cannot be done in two or three years. It's a large discussion, especially about the role of Austria during the Nazi past.

Jeffrey Herf: A question for Christian Fleck. My father is a German refugee, and he will never go back to Germany. I've gone to Germany many times since 1975. I have many German friends. Germany to me, and Europe, is a very differentiated, complex affair. I just want to address what Annie Cohen-Solal rightly noted, namely the aggressive tone of some of the questions here. We in America are suffering from treating people as groups instead of as individuals. There is also a tendency not to recognize that Europe is very different in 1995 from what it was in 1945. When I hear these questions I wonder what all the discussions on CNN and world-wide communication and travel mean, when people seem to still operate with images of Europe today that are out of date. I say that as an historian of Nazism who has spent a lot of time wading through the muck and mire of very dark days.

My question to Christian Fleck is whether you really think that the *Stasi* files should be closed. Not everyone in East Germany knows everything about everyone else. I have had a fair bit of contact with the NAME, the office in East Berlin that oversees access to the *Stasi* files, and my experience has been that they are as judicious and careful of protecting the rights of privacy as the American government is when it deals with Freedom of Information Act requests, and are very careful not to release the names of third parties who themselves are not historically significant individuals. The *Stasi* files do not only include rumors and blackmail and gossip about individuals, but also invaluable records concerning the history of political justice in the East German regime, trials that we did not know about before in the supreme court of East Germany. They also contain what will be invaluable and essential documents and information concerning East German foreign policy in Europe and the Middle East, for example. A history of this period cannot be written without them. I would be very careful about not lending one's voice to encourage closing these files prematurely. Remember that the files on the

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Nazi regime were opened and enabled historians in the forties and the fifties to begin writing the history of that government, which could not have been done if those files had not been accessible.

Christian Fleck: I want to say only that it's a problematic situation when you open files of secret services, of a dictatorship indiscriminately. It's a different case, of course, to open them to scientists and historians. To my knowledge there are a lot of mistakes in the *Stasi* files. There are a lot of articles and newspapers and magazines which are really crazy. But opening these files to historians and scholars is, I think, a reasonable way to cope with the past.

Edith Kurzweil: Thank you.

Gaspar Tamas: I have a critical comment and a question for Dr. Brede. Today, there was a lot of justified talk against trivializion, and relativizing what shouldn't be relativized and trivialized. I found your presentation very stimulating and interesting, except for what you said about Eastern Germany being annexed by West Germany (of course I've been in Germany a bit, I know what you mean). I would have accepted this remark if you didn't say at the same time that the German Democratic Republic was founded on a cluster of values such as solidarity, justice, morality, and so on. Well, if the fact of occupation can be used metaphorically in a subtle way about German reunification, I think we should perhaps remember that the socialist state on German soil wasn't born in Baden-Würtenberg or in Bavaria, but on the territory occupied by the Red Army. I think this, not socialist ideas that indeed came to be shared by a great number of people, is the basic fact about East Germany. I know that these ideals remain for many East Germans, but I think we cannot forget this fundamental fact.

Karola Brede: I understood what you said. I used the term "annexation" metaphorically. I did not say that the GDR was founded on certain values. It was based on a regime with socialist ideas. I made this argument because without it one couldn't understand the actual social conflicts when Germans from the West and Germans from the East meet. These values of solidarity and justice that were of a humanistic nature somehow have been implanted in the motivations of the people over there. They contribute to their life goals and to what makes sense in their lives. So you can't just ignore this aspect of the GDR as a socialist system. This happens quite often. It was part of this morning's

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discussion that socialism is founded on the idea of human rights. Many of these ideas became implanted. Yes, there were dissidents in the GDR who were critical on a political level, but as citizens they were loyal. There are contradictions. You have to realize that certain values are inculcated in people.

Edith Kurzweil: Thank you.

Mitchell Ash: Two small points. Annie Cohen-Solal referred to the nightmares the French are only now beginning to face. Their own history under the Nazi period raises a question that refers back to what Margarete Mitscherlich was speaking about this morning. It seems important to me not to limit our framework to Germany when we think about coming to terms with the past, with the images that are suppressed in public discussion. I don't mean to say, "Well, the French have their problems too, therefore those of the Germans are less serious," but that the seriousness of the issues becomes clear through the comparison. In this context a comparative perspective is important, because otherwise, especially when Germans look only at their own suppressed past, there's the danger of engaging in a kind of unintended reverse patriotism, of saying, "We were the best of the worst."

My other point refers to Karola Brede's comment about the functions of the antifascist initiatives in the East German past. We must remember that the antifascist mentality in the GDR had a political function. It was not intended to suppress guilt about the Nazi past but rather to mobilize guilt by ascribing it to East German citizens in order to help legitimize the power of the SED regime. They were the real antifascists rather than the people of Eastern Germany. The extent to which East German citizens, after three generations, sincerely have internalized antifascist values as goals is an interesting question for research. As to annexation, isn't it a problem when West German pedagogues and scholars try to tell East German teachers how to teach the Nazi past and tell East German citizens what they should think about the Nazi past according to the pedagogical model of history they have learned to internalize in Western Germany, without first asking the East Germans? Or without allowing the East Germans the space to work through these questions on their own? Isn't this pedagogical approach to the past inventing normative frameworks for telling people how they *should* have had their experiences, instead of asking them what their experiences were, and proceeding from that?

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Karola Brede: As you know, Niethammer conducted qualitative interviews at the time of the turn and found that antifascist ideas were not as implanted in people as one might think. But this is not a question of time or a normative question. I think it depends on how you conceptualize the encounter with the other part of Germany, as something that belonged to you and must be reappropriated or as something that is gone, whether you conceptualize it as the past of two different systems. I think the equivalence of these two states and their history has been emphasized enough; that is, with the reunification came the assumption, on the part of West Germany, that the East had no history and no system of its own. To think of two Germanies growing together implies, from the Western perspective, that there was always a tendency towards harmony, that previously there was no antagonism. I would put the emphasis differently. It's neither a pedagogical question nor a normative question.

Edith Kurzweil: We have one more brief question, and then we'll adjourn for lunch.

David Miap: I'm a graduate student at the New School for Social Research. It seems to me that in the discussions so far, the audience has used the speakers as some kind of confessors or mediums between themselves and another society, another culture. So I'm wondering what you think the role of the historian should be in relation to one's fellow colleagues, and then to the audiences they speak to. It seems that some people look to you as representatives of a sort of cultural dynasty, or an embodiment of Germany or Austria or wherever you're from. Could you speak about that? And do you differentiate between your own perceptions and the perceptions of your fellow countrymen? For instance, your perceptions as intellectuals versus those of people who have different lifestyles, different concerns. If so, how does that come out in your work and in your relationship with your audience?

Annie Cohen-Solal: You're raising two issues: that of historians versus witnesses, and that of having a passport of a certain nationality and bearing the responsibility of talking on behalf of this nationality. These are important questions when historians talk to an audience. At every conference, historians debate from their own scientific perspective which includes numbers, inquiries, looking into archives, newspapers, and oral history. They argue about what part science plays in history, and about the oral history of witnesses who talk about their subjectivity and their past and their biography. That is a complex debate. Oral history is part of something that has a legitimacy, but it is only one part of the work

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that the historian is doing by interviewing people who bear the memory. The second issue is, do I, because I am French, represent France? Absolutely not. Generalizations are the worst thing. The reality of each country is made up of many things, which include economy, history, culture, politics – both diachronic and synchronic. Simplifications, where one person is representing a stereotype of an entire country, are stupid. So let's talk about complexity.

Edith Kurzweil: Thank you, Annie. Obviously we're talking about very emotional issues which most people usually keep under wraps, and this meeting is bringing them up. In response to your question, of course, we all ask what can we do. We look at issues in ways that differ from our own perspectives and try to understand all we can from as many other perspectives as possible. Also, I should say I was motivated to organize this conference because I felt these were issues that are not on the table often enough, that are overlooked. There isn't that much interest in the culture at large, and when there is, the issues usually are approached in terms of stereotypes. So let's use the rest of this conference not to accept, or reject, directives from one to another, but to really plumb the issues more deeply and more broadly. We will reconvene promptly at three o'clock.

Session Three: How Can We "Reconcile" Communist and Nazi Legacies?

Carnes Lord: Welcomes to this session, which I will be the moderating. Our first speaker will be Paul Hollander, Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His books include *Anti-Americanism: Critiques at Home and Abroad* and *Decline and Discontent: Communism and the West Today*. He will speak on "Conflicting Moral Reassessments of Nazism and Communism." Next we will hear from Jeffrey Herf, Professor of History and Sociology and a Visiting Scholar at Princeton University's Institute for Advanced Study. He now is working on a book about politics and memory in the two Germanies, 1945-1989, and he will talk about "Divided Germany: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanies." Then we will hear from Gaspar Tamas, Professor of Philos-

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ophy at the University of Budapest and a former member of the Hungarian Parliament. One of his books, *Tribal Concepts,* will shortly appear in English. He will speak about "A Recent German Nationalism."

Paul Hollander: I want to raise the question of why – in comparison to the abundance and intensity of the emotions and moral outrage aroused by Nazism – Communist systems and their misdeeds have stimulated relatively little moral energy and outrage in the West at any time. It is a long-standing asymmetry in moral sentiment that calls for explanation especially when the demise of most Communist states provides not only new opportunities for unobstructed information gathering but also for an historical postmortem of these systems and their moral record.

When most Communist states at last joined Nazi Germany among the great defunct tyrannies of modern history a new relevance and urgency arose regarding the question posed above: Why the revulsion occasioned by their savagery has been relatively mild and muted in comparison to the attention paid to the Nazi regime and its inhumanities? Why have the other great moral outrages of modern times, and the political systems associated with them, not become the subject of similar, if not identical, moral revulsion and condemnation?

A comparative moral assessment must take into account not merely the political violence these systems inflicted on various groups, or the external aggression they initiated but also the quantity and quality of repression, regimentation, deprivation and non-lethal human rights violations they engaged in, as well as the character of their domestic social-political arrangements and institutions. Such a reassessment also requires comparison of the levels of mendacity these systems promoted and institutionalized.

Moreover these assessments should not be limited to Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The latter has not been the only Communist system, nor the most enduring, nor necessarily the most repressive. Other Communist states as well, notably China under Mao, Cuba, Ethiopia, the now extinct East European dependencies of the U.S.S.R., North Korea, and Vietnam, all shared a sufficient number of characteristics to allow reference to them as "Communist." They all were, or still are, one-party systems, governed by parties regarding themselves as Communist; they legitimated themselves by some version of Marxism-Leninism and controlled much of the economy of the countries in question; many promoted the grotesque public worship of their supreme leader.

Putting aside the comparative magnitude of mass murders for the moment, domestic political arrangements in major Communist countries

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through much of their existence were no less oppressive and regimented than those in Nazi Germany, if not more so. Arguably, the average, gentile, apolitical German under Nazism was less repressed, deprived or intimidated than the average Chinese or Soviet citizen under Communist rule. And if we compare the levels and quality of propaganda, or institutionalized mendacity, the deliberate and systematic misrepresentation of social and political realities and groups, it is hard to say who did more damage to truth and common human decency, the Nazi or Communist propagandists. On these grounds, too, it is far from clear why moral judgment should weigh more heavily against Nazi Germany than Stalin's Soviet Union or Mao's China. But if Hitler was less impelled to terrorize the average German than Stalin or Mao their own citizens, this was so because he had far more popular support than Stalin or Mao, and other Communist leaders.

It is not my purpose to call into question the uniqueness of Nazism and its major moral outrage, the Holocaust, the key source of the decisive moral delegitimation of Nazism. However, I want to explore the persisting differences between the moral assessments of these two types of systems.

The most obvious divergence between such moral assessments has been the widespread reluctance of scholars, publicists, and public figures to apply moral categories and criteria to the analysis of the Communist as opposed to the Nazi case. Illustrative of these attitudes has been the enduring scorn (in the media and among the liberal intelligentsia) heaped upon former President Reagan for calling the Soviet Union an "evil empire." Similar terminology and moral indignation directed at the Soviet Union and Communism by Solzhenistsyn contributed to his unpopularity among the Western liberal intelligentsia. It has been a part of conventional wisdom, in liberal, educated American and Western European circles, that a strong, morally informed critique of Communism is somehow inappropriate, unenlightened, and in poor taste.

For example while many Western intellectuals and social scientists believed that an "authoritarian personality" type might be the key to understanding the Nazi movement and system (as well as right-wing movements in general), the possibility that similar types might have been attracted to Communist systems (or left-wing movements) was hardly ever entertained. Also, American academics rarely, if ever, disputed the applicability of the concept of totalitarianism to Nazi Germany, whereas the idea of Soviet (and other Communist) totalitarianism generated intense, bitter and prolonged debates – precisely because of the moral dimensions and the implications of the concept.

Even the standards applied to the methodology of studying the two

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systems were different. There have been no suggestions that the testimony of refugees from Nazi Germany, or of Nazi concentration camp survivors, should be treated with reservations, that they were not completely dependable or that they were a biased source of information. By contrast, the social scientific value of corresponding reports by refugees from Communist societies was often questioned, as for example by Noam Chomsky who vigorously disputed the credibility of refugees from Pol Pot's Cambodia.

Few, if any, scholars were advised to constrain their moral indignation while studying Nazism; students of communist systems were regularly cautioned to curb their moral impulses and were admonished when they allowed them to find expression in their work. Students of Nazi Germany were not warned against the danger of imposing their own, ethnocentric, "Western" values, or urged to refrain from becoming judgmental.

Researchers and writers on Nazism did not feel compelled to silence the belief that Nazi leaders and functionaries were deeply flawed human beings, nor did they avoid hinting at the possibility that they were often possessed of a deformed psyche or of specific psychopathologies. (To be sure there was also the "banality of evil" approach pioneered by Hannah Arendt, but that too was confined to the realm of Nazism.) In any event inquiries into the psychology and personality of Nazi leaders and activists were common, and unlike similar probings of the personality of Communist leaders, generally treated with more respect. Hitler was generally perceived as self-evidently demagogic, undignified, and uneducated, further and finally delegitimating himself and his regime by suicide. Leaders of Communist systems succeeded in presenting a more dignified, thoughtful image; they rarely ranted and raved in public, and when they did, as for instance Castro, these prolonged exercises in demagogy were somehow overlooked. Communist leaders also succeeded at times and up to a point in projecting an image of themselves as intellectuals in power, philosopher kings.

While Western intellectuals and the educated public (and even the less educated, exposed to the mass media) acquired some knowledge of the major misdeeds of Nazism and the Holocaust in particular, it is unlikely that one in a thousand Americans ever heard of Kolyma or Vorkuta (Soviet prison camps where millions perished) or can recognize the names of Beria, Yagoda or Yezhov, whose activities corresponded to those of Eichmann or Himmler, names more readily recognized by Americans. And if most Americans have some idea of what *SS* or *Gestapo* stand for, it is quite unlikely that *GPU* or *NKVD* mean anything to

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them, let alone the Chinese *Public Security Bureau,* more likely to be taken for an agency dealing with matters of insurance or health than one dedicated to crushing political nonconformity.

Among these differences we should also point to the respectability of what might be called "Purge Revisionism" – the effort to reduce retroactively the number of the victims of the Soviet mass murders of the 1930s and otherwise redefine the meaning of these events. These academic revisionists, although criticized by some, were not ridiculed or read out of the scholarly community. Purge revisionism has been far more acceptable and respectable than Holocaust revisionism. The latter is not taken seriously in academic circles or by the media. Holocaust revisionists have generally been treated with well-deserved contempt and relegated to the realm of cranks and frauds.

A recent collection of essays edited by J. Ash Getty and Roberta Manning, *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives,* is especially revealing precisely from the standpoint of the moral response to such matters, reflected in the interpretation of the outrages in question. The pursuit of detachment that emerges brings back a remark Czeslaw Milosz made in *The Captive Mind* forty years ago, "From the moment we acknowledge historical necessity to be something in the nature of a plague, we shall stop shedding tears over the fate of the victims. A plague or an earthquake do not usually provoke indignation. One admits they are catastrophes, folds the morning paper and continues eating breakfast."

What one finds in the new causal analysis, if not exactly an evocation of "historical necessity," is certainly akin to a plague or an earthquake. Getty and his colleagues are anxious to diminish both Stalin's personal responsibility for the terror *and* that of the political system he created; they consider it a mistake to seek "the origins of Stalinist terror in the person of the deranged dictator, the 'administrative system' of the time or the very nature of Leninism." What then are we left with? It is a peculiarly diffuse explanation of these events by which a moral focus or definition is removed. Getty and William Chase wrote, "When the terror erupted in 1936-37, it quickly went out of control, chaotically reflecting personal hatreds and propelling itself with fear. Explanations of the terror . . . should be supplemented by approaches that account for lack of coordination, local confusion and personal conflicts."

Insofar as the terror was "uncoordinated" it does reduce the responsibility of the political system, as do the "local confusion" and "personal conflicts" which contributed to it. Earlier in the same volume Getty and Manning suggest (referring to the writing of another of the revisionists) that "Stalin . . . Ezhov and highly placed NKVD operatives sincerely be-

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lieved that the nation was riddled with plots and conspiracies . . . this response was rooted in traditional rural beliefs that the machinations of evil spirits accounted for commonplace misfortunes . . . the elements of pre-revolutionary rural culture helped fuel Stalinist persecutions under the impact of . . . scarcity. . . ."

What Getty and his colleagues here intimate is that conspiratorial fantasies sincerely entertained help to explain the terror and possibly also its spontaneous, uncoordinated aspects, as those involved with it were gripped by these irrational beliefs and impulses. As may be recalled the Nazis also sincerely believed in conspiracies, and especially the Jewish world conspiracy; this in no way undermined their ability to devise highly efficient methods to get rid of the Jews, nor was the outside world inclined to diminish their responsibility for these mass killings on account of these delusions.

Especially noteworthy are the non- or pre-Soviet factors, that is, the "pre-revolutionary rural culture" and "traditional rural beliefs" enlisted as they are to further dilute the responsibility of the Soviet system and its representatives for the mass murders. Elsewhere in the volume Roberta Manning wrote, "In the late 1930s, reformist efforts gave way to terror under the impact of the desperate conditions of the times. Political, social and economic tensions, aggravated by the onset of German expansionism, the sudden escalation of ongoing border conflicts with the Japanese in Manchuria, the 1936 crop failure and national decisions to prosecute former members of defunct opposition movements created a tense political climate."

This "climate" in turn led to the "exceedingly harsh measures" of the period "accorded many suspected offenders," Manning further argues – especially intent on showing that there was "considerable input from below" (that is, at the local level), "as well as intervention from above." When all is said and done "the new perspectives on Stalinist terror" leave us with such a wide range of factors and explanations – many of them seemingly independent of human will – that moral responsibility for the outrages becomes difficult if not altogether impossible to locate.

One explanation of this state of affairs may be found in the general, long-standing, indeed chronic Western ignorance and misperception of Communist systems, which for much of their existence were (or have been) largely closed societies. Why have these misperceptions persisted for so long? Aside from ignorance, several other factors help to explain these discrepancies. It is likely that the relative paucity and quality of information about the Communist mass murders account for the different moral reactions. While in the post-Stalin era the quantitative dimensions of Soviet mass murders began to emerge, they remained an abstraction for the

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public at large, even for the well educated. This is even truer for the Chinese, Cuban, North Vietnamese, and other Communist atrocities and repressions.

Still, lack of information as such has not been the decisive factor in the tepid moral reactions. There was information already in the 1930s, increasingly so after World War II, and even more following the de-Stalinization campaign of Khrushchev after 1956. There were even some comparative accounts (based on personal experience) of Nazi and Soviet concentration camps such as *Under Two Dictators* by Margarete Buber and Gustav Herling's *World Apart*. But such accounts attracted little public attention and sparked little moral outrage, before the publication of *The Gulag Archipelago*.

Nazism was defeated in war and thereby conclusively delegitimated; there was no possibility of "a Nazism with a human face" arising, of a Nazism reformed under more enlightened leaders (equivalents of Khrushchev or Gorbachev). Nazism had few, if any defenders in the West partly because the system was dead. Defeat by itself has moral implications. Even former Nazis were somewhat chastened in the wake of the defeat and less likely to defend the system, to seek legitimation or excuses for their beliefs and actions.

The defeat of Nazi Germany was also important because it made possible unobstructed information-gathering: extermination camps could be filmed, archives scrutinized, evil-doers captured, interrogated, tried and sentenced in public. Survivor witnesses provided vivid accounts about the horrors they experienced. Nazism never had the same appeal for Westerners – especially opinion makers, leaders and intellectuals – as did the Soviet Union and other Communist systems. And National Socialism, unlike Marxism-Leninism, was not a universalistic ideology; it could not be applied to other Western (or non-Western) societies. The ideology of Nazi Germany represented a reversal of the hopes and optimistic expectations of the nineteenth century regarding the decline of obscurantist beliefs, including nationalism and the conflicts inspired by it. There were no great thinkers or historical figures associated with National Socialist ideology, whose legacy it claimed to realize. It was difficult to argue that the ideals of Nazism were impressive, that only its practice left something to be desired. Few Western intellectuals, churchmen, or opinion leaders idealized Nazi Germany.

Moreover, for most of its existence Nazi Germany was an undeniably aggressive, warlike society which also detracted from possible idealization. (The Nazi-Soviet conflict itself tilted the scales decisively in favor of the Soviet Union and allowed the earlier Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939 to

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be forgotten.)

It was also more difficult to idealize Nazi Germany because it was geographically, culturally, and historically accessible, a part of the West. Unlike many Communist countries it was not distant or seemingly exotic, and thus it could not be mistaken for a country populated by modern-day equivalents of noble savages, whom many Western visitors discovered inhabiting the former Soviet Union, China, Vietnam and other third-world Communist countries. Germany was highly industrialized and urban – it did not offer imaginary refuge from the frustrations and deprivations of modernity, as did several Communist systems.

At the same time the very fact that Germany was a part of the West, in the heart of Europe, the country of Bach, Beethoven, Dürer, Goethe and Mann, of great universities and well-educated people, made the policies and practices of Nazism all the more abhorrent and shocking. Indeed, over time the idea developed that there was something in the German national character, its authoritarian tendencies, submissiveness to authority, and rigidity that explained the unique evils of Nazism. If so, Nazism came to be associated with some essential, deeply-rooted evil in human nature, in some ways easier to grasp and personalize than evils which arise out of the efforts to implement attractive ideals.

Possibly, it was the difference between the character and procedures (if not the quantitative dimensions) of the Nazi and Communist mass murders which provide a key to the different moral responses to these two types of political systems and the historically unparalleled slaughters they carried out. The Soviet and other Communist mass killings were in many significant ways different from the Nazi ones. There had been no extermination camps using modern technology and machinery, such as gas chambers and crematoria; no reports (or hardly any) of lethal medical experiments on human beings. Most victims of Communist systems were killed in relatively simple, old-fashioned ways, either shot or more often allowed to die of starvation, cold, and various diseases in what the Communist authorities used to call "corrective labor or reeducation camps," or beaten to death (as in Cambodia). Millions also died as a result of politically-induced famine without being detained, especially in the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and China.

On the other hand the total number of the Communist victims was far greater than those of the Nazis. However, a large portion of the Soviet, Chinese and other victims – some might argue – were not actually killed; they just could not survive harsh living conditions prevailing in the camps, many of which were not subject to human control. These living conditions, some might further contend, resulted less from ill will, or deliberate policy than from overall backwardness, indifference, disorganiza-

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tion, and even the needs of the economy. After all, slave labor was badly needed to carry out the great construction projects of these societies, and if mortality rates were high, these regrettable sacrifices were exacted to accomplish worthy objectives.

Such arguments were sometimes made without any embarrassment. Upton Sinclair wrote in 1938 about the victims of the famines and collectivization in the Soviet Union: "They drove rich peasants off the land and sent them to work in lumber camps and on railroads. Maybe it cost a million lives – maybe . . . five million – but you cannot think intelligently about millions it might have cost if the changes had not been made. . . . There has never been in human history great social change without killing."

Also important for an understanding of the variation in moral responses is the fact that although the mass murders of Communist systems consumed far more human beings than the Holocaust (the Chinese, Soviet, and Cambodian regimes together easily account for approximately one hundred million lives), these killings were not explicitly genocidal in design, though they might have been in their consequences. There was no single ethnic group targeted for total elimination; the victims were drawn from virtually every social stratum and ethnic group. (An interesting similarity in the patterns of victimization is that homosexuals were persecuted not only in Nazi Germany but in China and Cuba as well.)

In Nazi Germany the state set up highly productive extermination plants with no less of a goal than the total elimination of the Jewish population of Europe, perhaps some day of the whole world. It was a carefully planned, highly organized, premeditated operation that had spectacular results. Never before had so many people been killed so efficiently in such a short period of time. The unique, and uniquely repugnant qualities of the Nazi mass murders were also inseparable from the attributes and resources of an industrial society; the gas chambers and crematoria were the fruits of modernity and applied science. In turn modernity has been increasingly resented and rejected by Western elites; insofar as the mass murders of Nazism and modern industrial society could be linked, this too has fueled and prolonged a more impassioned moral indignation regarding the victims of Nazism compared to those of Communism.

To the extent that the Communist mass murders were confronted by those on the Western left, they were made morally more tolerable by viewing them as (regrettable) means to glorious and desirable ends. Nazism had no such ends. Legitimizers of Communist violence were interested only in the ends and knew little of the means, nor were they eager to learn about them. Sartre provided the most ambitious (and

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morally repellent) rationalization for this position. "Like it or not, the construction of socialism is privileged in that to understand it one must espouse its movement and adopt its goals; in a word, we judge what it does in the name of what it seeks. . . ."

Seeking to justify Soviet political violence associated with the Purges, Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy, two American academic Marxists, asked in 1953, "Is violence used to perpetuate a state of affairs in which violence is inevitable, or . . . [is] it used in the interests of creating a truly human society from which it will be possible at long last to banish violence altogether?"

This was rationalization the Nazis also could have gladly endorsed; after all, once they purified the world of Jews there was not going to be any further need for violence.

The human costs of Chinese social engineering under Mao were as momentous as any. The Chinese gulag literature is still in its infancy though rapidly growing; the violence and irrationality associated with the "Great Cultural Revolution" is becoming somewhat better known. The unique contribution or by-product of the Chinese Communist repressions has been a more far-reaching atomization of personal and group relationships than either the Soviet or Nazi system managed to achieve. Under Mao greater use was made of grass roots coercion, violence, intimidation, mutual denunciation, and organized group controls than in either Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. As far as I know, only in Communist China were public denunciation boxes available on the streets; only there were parents presented a bill for the costs of the ammunition used to execute their children or other relatives. Only in China were inmates pressured to undergo "thought reform" which largely consisted of mutual denunciation and chastisement in supervised groups. Family disruption and separation caused by the political stigmatization of one member also appeared to have been more widespread in China than in the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany. The Chinese were advised that "to join the Youth League you must admit that you have a reactionary class background. . . . This is the first step. Afterward you can draw a clear line to separate yourself from the contamination of your family. Only by criticizing your father will you show that you are qualified to join the revolutionary ranks." The more we learn of the political violence and repression in China under Mao, the more compelling the question raised in the beginning of these reflections becomes.

The self-evidently warlike character of Nazism and more recently the fear of nuclear war also tilted the scales against Nazi Germany when contrasted with Communist countries and particularly the Soviet Union. Nazi Germany engaged in little peace propaganda; it was hard to mis-

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take it for a peace-loving nation. By contrast the Soviet Union could plausibly claim, after the losses of World War II, that it was eager to maintain peace. Moreover Soviet and other Communist expansion was somewhat more subtle. Soviet (and other Communist) troops did not as often and as blatantly storm across national borders as those of Nazi Germany (though they did so at times). Much of the Soviet empire was less a result of naked conquest than a by-product of World War II and the Soviet pursuit of German troops through Eastern Europe.

It is interesting to speculate whether Western attitudes toward Nazi Germany would have resembled those toward the Soviet Union if Germany had had nuclear weapons. As may be recalled, during much of the Cold War Western peace activists strenuously argued that criticism of the Soviet system endangered peace, that nuclear war was the ultimate evil ("better red than dead"), that what mattered were the similarities between ordinary Americans and Soviet people; that in any event due to our collective sins (racism, neo-colonialism, sexism, and so on) we in the West were not entitled to take a morally superior, judgmental position regarding the Soviet Union or other Communist states.

The wartime alliance between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. was another source of favorable attitudes toward the Soviet Union, leading at the time to suppression of negative information about Soviet domestic political practices. Among the explanations of the differences it should also be noted that many survivors of the Holocaust settled in the United States and by their very presence contributed to the moral climate here discussed, whereas fewer survivors of the Soviet camps made it to these shores. They may have been less articulate or interested in making their experiences known, and there may have been less interest in them. We don't see television programs involving Communist Russia or China, but we see many about Nazi Germany. There has been no initiative so far to build a museum to the victims of Communism, in Washington D.C. or anywhere else in this country.

Despite the opening up of the former Soviet Union (and other Communist countries), interest in the moral reassessment of Communist atrocities in the West remains minimal. The least attention has been paid to the questions of moral outrage, to why it has been so limited and so neutralized even when Communist systems are no longer idealized or grossly misrepresented – either in scholarly writings or in the mass media.

Perhaps only when the insights of Isaiah Berlin become more widely appreciated will it be possible to reduce if not close the gap between the attitudes here discussed. Berlin wrote several decades ago, "The two great liberating political movements of the ninteenth century were . . . humanitarian individualism and romantic nationalism. . . . These two

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great currents finally ended in exaggerated and indeed distorted forms as communism and fascism – the first treacherous heir of liberal individualism . . . the second as the culmination and bankruptcy of the mystical patriotism which animated the national movements of the time."

Only when the comparable (though by no means identical) evil of Nazi and Communist systems is at last confronted will the moral-political accounting of this century be complete.

Carnes Lord: Thank you. We'll go directly to Jeffrey Herf.

Jeffrey Herf: The opening of the archives of the former Communist governments has ushered in a new phase of the reconstruction of the history of twentieth-century Communism. In addition to the fictional literature of disillusionment with Communism that has played such an important role in the history of *Partisan Review,* historians will be offering accounts based on documents. For German historians, the fall of the Wall has meant the opening of the archives of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party, as well as of the *Stasi* archives. As a result, we have been able to reconstruct in unprecedented detail the history of the treatment of the Jewish question after 1945 at the top levels of the East German Communist Party and government.

I have argued elsewhere that the postwar era in both West and East Germany can be described as one of "multiple restorations." That is, the Allied victory meant both the suppression of Nazism as a significant political force, as well as encouragement of those non- and anti-Nazi German political traditions which had been suppressed and driven into exile in 1933. All of the leading political figures of the postwar era, from right to left – Konrad Adenauer, Kurt Schumacher, Theodor Heuss, Ernst Reuter, Walter Ulbricht, Wilhelm Pieck – had been active in politics during the Weimar Republic. All had come of political age long before 1933. American and Soviet hegemony in this context did not mean the imposition of foreign views on a German *tabula rasa* but the nurturing and restoration of these traditions – conservatism, liberalism, social democracy, and Communism. The Adenauer era was an era of restoration but so too was the revival of tradition-bound Social Democracy and the Communist Party. When these political leaders spoke to their fellow Germans about the Nazi past, they did so in the idioms and language of intact political beliefs. In a period of catastrophe and despair, inherited ideologies and convictions became a more precious resource. The restorative character of the era was evident in East Germany as well. The continuity of Communist traditions before and after 1945 is evident

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in the manner in which East German political leaders examined the Nazi past.

It was the oft-repeated claim of the East German Communist government that it, unlike the West German government, had broken with the bad continuities in German history. The Communists claimed to stand for the good and the other Germany, and the always defeated but never completely extinguished spirit of humanism, socialism. During and after the era of Nazism, as François Furet has recently pointed out in *Le passé d'une illusion,* an important work on twentieth-century Com-munism in Europe, the Communists placed themselves in the camp of the democratic forces arrayed against fascism. In East Berlin after 1945, anti-fascism offered the central legitimation for the imposition of a new dictatorship, that is, to prevent the return of Nazism in a country whose people had fought for the Nazis to the bitter end. As soon became apparent, the Communists also stood in another continuity of German history, nationalism, and some of its long-standing traditions of anti-Semitism.

The anti-Semitism of the Communist regime differed profoundly from the Nazis extermination ideology and practice but overlapped with old, base, and persistent associations of the Jews with capitalism and national betrayal. If, as critics such as Theodor Adorno argued at the time, Cold War anti-Communism in West Germany unintentionally evoked elements of the political constellation of the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, so the Soviet and East German assault on cosmopolitanism from 1949 to 1956 also revived old German resentments of the West and the Jews. By winter 1952-53 it was clear that a second German dictatorship, though proclaiming itself to be the repository of anti-fascist virtue, would pursue policies inimical to the interests of the few remaining Jews within East Germany and to the state of Israel as well.

Since the publication of Marx's youthful essay on the Jewish question, the identification of Jews with capitalism had remained a component of the Marxist tradition. To be sure, it vied with a contrasting leftist tradition of opposition to anti-Semitism but it never fully disappeared, even in the years of Communist anti-fascism after the 1920s. Within the German Communist emigration during the Nazi era, debate over the Jewish question and the unfolding Nazi persecution of European Jewry took different forms in different places, especially in the primary poles of Communist exile politics, Moscow and Mexico City. The German Communists in Mexico City had the advantage of distance from Moscow and the need to address the concerns of Jewish refugees in Mexico City. The result was that the fullest discussion of the Jewish

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catastrophe in the history of German Communism took place in Mexico City between 1942 and 1945. It appeared in the pages of the Communist journal *Freies Deutschland*. Paul Merker, a non-Jewish German Communist and member of the KPD politburo was the leading advocate of Communist support for restitution to Jewish survivors and later for the new state of Israel. Leo Zuckermann, who was Jewish, offered legal justifications for such policies. Their articles and arguments in wartime Mexico stood in sharp contrast to the marginalization of the Jewish catastrophe by Walter Ulbricht and Wilhelm Pieck in the radio and press propaganda they conveyed to German POWs from Moscow.

The German Communists in wartime Mexico City argued that Jews and Communists, especially in the face of Nazi persecution, were natural allies. Yet Stalin had declared that the Jews, lacking the prerequisites of common territory and nationality, were not a genuine nation. German Communists in Moscow gave primacy to the defense of the Soviet Union. Moreover, Stalin's ascendancy was associated with a growing distrust of the "cosmopolitan" connections of Jews within the Communist parties.

While in the West, critical discussion of the Popular Front generally focused on the gullibility of Western liberals in the face of Communist tactics, Stalin had similar fears about Communists who fled to the West during World War II, that is, that they would become infected by the spirit of liberal democracy, and bring these dangerous ideas back into the Soviet bloc after 1945. The Soviet historical narrative after 1945 was one of triumph and historical vindication. The catastrophe of European Jewry found no place in this forward-looking dialectic. Though Stalin had declared in 1913 that the Jews were not a nation, they refused to disappear. Finally, in 1948, with the intensification of the Cold War, those Jews and non-Jews who had returned from wartime emigration in the West fell victim to a new and dread charge: cosmopolitanism.

The catalogue of sins of cosmopolitanism was nourished by a familiar list of hatreds and resentments including an excessive concern for money, lack of rooted national identity, contempt for patriotism, and subordination of national concerns to international conspiracies. In East Germany this language and this discourse recalled the traditional terms of German and European anti-Semitism. The Cold War discourse of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism overlapped with the older terms of the German *Sonderweg,* the special path that contrasted with and was opposed to the liberal West. In this sense as well, postwar German Communism restored older traditions.

In East Berlin, though the active purge of the cosmopolitans was

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concentrated in the period between 1950 and 1956, its legacies of acceptable doctrine and careers made and destroyed set the terms of East German anti-fascism until the regime collapsed in the peaceful upheavals of 1989-90. The essentials of the story are the following. In 1950, Paul Merker was expelled from the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei*) or SED as a result of his wartime contact with Noel Field, said to be an American agent. Immediately following the executions of eleven of fourteen defendants in the Slansky Trial in Prague in November 1952, Merker was arrested and charged with being a member of an international conspiracy of American imperialists, capitalists, and Zionist agents. One of those executed in Prague was Otto Katz, who had been a friend of Merker's in Mexico City. The goal of the conspiracy was said to be the destruction of Communism in Europe through the actions of leading, mostly Jewish, Communist Party officials working with foreign agents. In 1949 and 1950, Zuckermann had been Chief of Staff in the office of Wilhelm Pieck, then the President of the German Democratic Republic. In 1950, in the wake of the Noel Field accusations, he had resigned under pressure. Ten days after Merker was arrested, Leo Zuckermann fled to West Berlin because he correctly assumed that he was about to be arrested by the *Stasi*.

In December 1952, the SED Central Committee also demanded of the leaders of the organized Jewish communities in East Germany that they publicly denounce the Joint Distribution Committee as an espionage outfit; equate Zionism with fascism; describe American justice as criminal because of the Rosenberg case; state that West German restitution payments amounted to exploitation of the German people; and attack the West German agreements with Israel. Julius Meyer, the leader of the Jewish Community in Berlin, and four other leaders of Jewish communities, fooled East German authorities into thinking they would sign the statement, then fled to West Berlin. In December-January of 1952-53, one third of the Jewish community in East Germany fled to the West. In January 1953, Meyer said that the East German Jewish leaders decided to do so out of fear of a repetition of the November pogrom of 1938.

In winter 1952-53 at the very latest, it was clear to everyone involved in East German politics that the regime was going to enact policies hostile to the state of Israel and to the interests of Jews within Germany. With the *Stasi* files of Merker, Zuckermann, and Alexander Abusch, the editor of *Freies Deutschland* in Mexico City, and future Minister of Culture in East Germany, we now have important details of the inner history of the anti-cosmopolitan purge. The files include transcripts

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of the interrogations between Merker and the *Stasi* and NKVD interrogators while he was held in investigative detention from 1952 to 1955. We also have interrogations of other Communists who knew Merker in French and Mexican exile, as well as the transcript of the court verdict in a previously secret trial conducted against Merker in the East German Supreme Court in March of 1955. They reveal a depth of anti-Jewish sentiment utterly at odds with the regime's antifascist claims. For example, in March 1953, Merker's interrogators wondered why, given that he was not Jewish, a German Communist like himself would take such pro-Jewish positions? The only answer his *Stasi* interrogators – and their NKVD associates – found credible was that he had been bought off by an international Jewish conspiracy.

The Leo Zuckermann *Stasi* file includes his anguished appeal to the party Central Committee with which he seeks to justify his support for restitution and for Israel by referring to the deaths of twenty members of his family in the Holocaust. Abusch's file includes his 1953 recantation and self-criticism entitled "My Errors in Mexico and Their Lessons for the Present" in which he acknowledges his failure to grasp the "enemy nature" of the "Jewish chauvinism" inherent in Merker's positions. It offers a telling account of how one saves a career in the midst of a purge by promises of sincerely intended ideological conformity, along with a willingness to testify against and inform on the activities of others under suspicion. While "naming names" in the United States was a defining feature of the "scoundrel time" of the 1950s, naming names in East Berlin became a mark of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary virtue. As a result of the opening of the archives, we can now document the suppression of the Jewish question as well as the purging of those Communists who sought to retain wartime solidarity with Jews after 1945. Further, we have gained additional insight into the terms of reentry on which Communists of Jewish origin, such as Abusch, and Albert Norden, were able to regain positions within the East German government.

In East Germany, the Cold War drew on older anti-Western resentments which had previously been articulated primarily on the German right. The Soviet-led campaign against cosmopolitanism of the 1950s overlapped with old and familiar anti-Semitic associations of the Jews with international banking and finance. From beginning to end, the East German regime was dependent on Soviet arms. However, its ideological arsenal was always more than a Soviet import. Scholars have found no evidence to suggest that the East German Communists ever told their Soviet comrades that because of the Nazi persecution of the Jews, they,

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the East Germans, could not and would not go along with the anti-Semitic campaigns. In East Germany, the outcome of the purge of the cosmopolitans was never fundamentally challenged. Speaking the language of anti-fascism, a second German dictatorship attacked the Jews.

Carnes Lord: Thank you very much. Our last speaker will be Gaspar Tamas.

Gaspar Tamas: Unlike the excellent speakers before me, I am neither an historian nor a sociologist, just a philosopher. Therefore, my remarks will be a bit duller because I won't talk about events but about theories and ideas, about new developments in German nationalism. I want to make some preliminary remarks. The time is gone, and I think that it's good that it's gone, in which foreigners such as myself could patronize Germans and tell them what's what. Germans can perfectly well look after themselves. I think that Germany is one of the most stable liberal democracies in Europe today, with fewer structural troubles than either England or Italy or even France. Compared to the xenophobia experienced in some East European countries or in France, or in other parts of the world, German xenophobia is relatively harmless, insofar as xenophobia can be harmless at all.

Secondly, developments within the new German nationalism, which I will undertake to criticize briefly, are to be considered as the background of a stable, prosperous democracy that indeed has peculiar problems, the first of which is the problem of the German past, psychological difficulties resulting from the Nazi period and from the division of Germany into two states, one of which was under Russian occupation and was a Communist, anti-democratic, indeed, tyrannical state. But other democracies are beset with similiar problems of guilt and bad conscience, to which they respond with a questionable and strange stream of self-accusation such as, for example, the British do when they think about their colonial past. When German nationalists criticize the tendency of the Germans toward a national masochism, there is great revulsion, among the German youth especially, against this self-criticism, rightly or wrongly perceived as an exaggeration of guilt. Germany is to be considered now, I think, as a normal European country. Therefore, it shouldn't be accused too much and shouldn't be excused too much either. The standards of a democracy are on the whole comprehensible and clear, and Germany doesn't want to be subjected to criticisms other than those which start from the usual criteria of decency and liberal democratic ethic that other countries are subjected to.

I think that the new German nationalism, indeed a strange and not

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always attractive phenomenon, should always be considered as background. I must say furthermore that understanding the new German nationalism is quite easy for an East European such as myself. It is quite interesting that while mainstream Germany is very similar to the rest of Western Europe, mainstream bourgeois consumerist Germany is not unlike Denmark or Poland or Sweden or Switzerland. German nationalism is a phenomenon of a distressed militant minority, very much like that in Russia, the Balkans, Hungary. The same psychological and ideological characteristics can be found in the new German nationalism and the East European version.

Yet it's interesting that the new German nationalists think they are rehabilitating German tradition, that it can somehow give back dignity to the Germans, stop this barrage of self-criticism and masochism, give back pride to Germany. But by doing this, they don't notice that what they are doing is not at all traditional. German nationalism on the whole in the nineteenth century, in the classical mode, wasn't very defensive. It was a very aggressive, statist nationalism, in favor of national unity, of centralization. It was characterized, and this is why it was criticized for so long, by a cult of the state, an instititutionalism. It glorified the army, the bureaucracy, the emperor, the government. Indeed this German humility in the face of state authority was a characteristic of classical German nationalism, while the new nationalism, the most characteristic proponents of whom are the writer Botho Strauss, the filmmaker Hans Jürgen Syberberg, the historian Ernst Nolte, and a few others, is very untraditional.

What do these people say? The two most characteristic statements are the book by Syberberg about art in Germany, published in 1991, and the widely-read the essay by Strauss. Their writings tell us: we Germans are people like you. The first difference is here: The nationalistic discourse of Syberberg and Strauss is addressed to foreigners abroad, their symbolic audience. They ask, "Why aren't we allowed to have our nationalist pride just as you do?" To which my response, a cynical response as a foreigner, is, "Get on with it. Be proud. Who is stopping you?" They plead, "Germany is indeed a terrible place. We don't have the courage to be proud, we are a decadent lot, we are more McDonald-ized than the Americans. We are more Frenchified than the French. We are not Germans any longer, we don't deserve to be proud, but still, please, let us be proud." Again, this is a very defensive, self-torturing nationalism, a nationalism of guilt. Syberberg and others are criticizing the guilt they think is imposed by foreigners – Americans, Jews, French, etc. – on "good Germans," but they themselves exemplify the false guilt they are trying to criticize.

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The new nationalists hate "the state," especially their own. They think that the successful liberal democratic German state – which they too, as constitutional patriots, don't call *Deutschland* but *Bundesrepublik*, an important rhetorical distinction – is a foreign, artificial creation, the Federal Republic. The Federal Republic is a state that has been imposed by an historical disaster. It is alien to the German nation. Thus, the new nationalism actually opposes the most successful German state there ever was.

What is considered "the common democratic nationalism" in itself is self-congratulatory. The Americans talk about this great nation of theirs, the French about *lá republique*. In contrast, the new German nationalism is opposed to all the institutions that characterize the German nation as it is today. So, like the Russian, the Hungarian, the Macedonian nationalism, it is anarchic, anti-statist; its focus is not politics but culture. All cultural nationalisms of the twentieth century are anti-political. The new German type contends that all Germans belong to a community that is independent of their state.

The new rightist German nationalism indeed has very nasty undertones. Still, it is dissimilar to what we observed when our forefathers, who were unfortunate enough to witness the nationalism of the twenties that paved the way for National Socialism, were faced with: a strong German nationalism, a kind of affirming and bolstering of the state. People like Strauss and Syberberg and Zittelmann, and others, are no different from the far left in their hatred for the German state.

This changes the situation very interestingly. Nationalism is no longer an ideology of the establishment, as Strauss says. The German establishment is liberal. So the new German nationalism is not so much directed against the French or the Americans, but against German liberals. It is very much in the spirit of Oswald Spengler, who in his now-forgotten but once celebrated work, *Prussianism and Socialism,* took up what was wrong with the idea of "German liberalism." His answer was that it is an oxymoron, it couldn't exist; Germany was not England. A German who is a liberal cannot be a German. This is what to a certain extent Strauss says, that the enemies are within. But unlike in Spengler's time, it is only within. "German decadence" means for Strauss and for Syberberg that Germany has somehow relinquished its tragic mission and identified itself with the most banal, dullest, most uninteresting thing, with liberal democracy. And it has lost its essence.

A few words about the most important German nationalist, Ernst Nolte. Of course, as Professor Gress told us this morning, people misread Nolte (I'm not talking about Hillgrubber; that's a different thing alto-

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gether) because they confuse explanation with justification. I would say that what Nolte is engaged in is advocacy, not justification; he's not a fascist; he's not justifying National Socialism or Hitler. But the tendency of his latest work is quite unmistakeable. He is one of the great historians of our age, a great scholar. But the political message of his latest work – great historians always do have a message – is the following: Germany is normal, not only now, but on the whole has always been normal. Normal, for example, in the most terrible age of mankind, the first half of the twentieth century, when the norm was genocide. So Germany, says Nolte, was responding to some dangers, and there's one aspect in which the danger was real. He says that Jewry had indeed, as Professor Koch quoted him, something to do with Communism. Indeed, universalism was an expression of those who from within glimpsed the exterior, because they were a discriminated-against minority. This kind of universalist regard and bias that was intrinsic and characteristic to Jewry was akin to Communism: it was the extreme form of universalism, and it was dangerous for Germany. Nolte has the "effrontery" to characterize the victory of the Allies in 1945 as an ambivalent victory of Jewish nationalism. Well, some people think he has gone too far; and indeed, it is a very strange view of history.

But what is important politically in terms of the development of German ideology – to use a time-worn term – is that as a result Germany will enter the community of normal states regardless of its political regime and its political past. Nolte's approach is similar to Strauss's and others in its decidedly anti-political character. His approach says, we are all normal, even if we are evil; evil is part of human nature. Germans have committed unspeakable crimes, but so would others. What we should regard now is the effective military, financial, and institutional history, without being terrified by the Moloch of millions of innocent dead.

I think this is a dangerous view. I do believe that we cannot see this phenomenon as momentous, but I wouldn't neglect its importance. What I see here is the decline of the idea of citizenship and the inability to form a political identification with one's nation, an inability to come to terms not with the past but with the present. Germany's present is modern, liberal, technological, consumerist, not tragic. Syberberg says, Germany's trouble is that it has lost its sense of the tragic. But why would a German today say, "We want the tragic to be the essence of our being"? Germans want decency, and peace. That is the prevailing mood. But for a long time German nationality was identified by towering cultural figures in a romantic, mythological way, and it is reflected now (this is probably one of the only things I agree with Habermas

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about) in constitutional patriotism. It is important for Germans to identify with their country but also to live in prosperity and peace. This new kind of self-satisfied, un-romantic, national feeling and identification with institutions is the bourgeois kind of nationalism that classical German nationalism always has historically opposed. Fichte has finally been defeated. The discussion of the founding of German nationalism has finally become obsolete for the first time in German history. The fervent desire for freedom, liberty, and racial nationalism, which originated with Fichte, is at its end. And the romantic new right cannot recreate it. This complaining, sulking, satirical, indirect, subtle new nationalism doesn't capture people's imaginations, for the very simple reason that what it recites is a list of complaints by people linked to the tradition of German nationalism by a high culture that is more successfully undermined by German television than by the bombing of Dresden.

Carnes Lord: Thank you. We will open the floor to discussion.

Dmitri Urnov: I teach at Adelphi University, and I am from Russia. Since all of the panelists touched on my country, I would like to briefly comment on each of their remarks. I would like to support Professor Hollander's amazement at the tolerance of and lack of responsiveness to the atrocities which were taking place in my country during the Soviet period, most of all to our own people, by the international community. Professor Hollander could find real support, historical evidence by looking at what Russia's oldest generation of emigrés, the post-revolutionary emigration, wrote immediately upon leaving Russia or having been exiled from it.

I speak as an insider. I was born in the year Stalin's constitution was adopted and went through the whole period of Stalinist and post-Stalinist indoctrination. And I can testify to the fact that with all the stupidities that were taught, there was never a hint of racism. We never were told that as a nation we were in any sense superior to others.

Professor Herf, I believe, found a perfect formula for describing Stalin's political attitudes. Stalin looked at Jews as possible holes in the Iron Curtain. That explains the initial persecution of his closest colleagues and allies or their wives – when his colleagues were Russian and their wives were Jewish. On the other hand, the Cold War drastically changed the situation of the country. But it never changed its attitude about Soviet or American allies. We always believed in FDR as a great figure, and neither Stalin himself nor anyone after cast a single shadow on that.

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Carnes Lord: Would anyone like to comment?

David Gress: I have one brief clarification and then a question for Dr. Tamas. The clarification concerns Ernst Nolte. Nolte has said many strange things in his life; I was talking only about one article published in 1986, which I think people deliberately misread because they wanted to find errors in it. I consider him a curiosity rather than a danger.

My question concerns these neo-nationalists whom I also read with fascinated interest. You mentioned Zygmut Zittelman; you also said that he and other neo-nationalists were really against their own state and society. They're also wishing that the state would stand up and fight for itself. That leads me to ask you: does this anarchic, anti-statist nationalism go right back to the twenties? In the twenties, the Weimar Republic was despised by many nationalists. That is where you would have the root of anarchic, anti-statist nationalism.

Gaspar Tamas: Yes, you are right. Nolte's article was misread. Zittelman is a journalist and is more obliged to be in tune with the mainstream than either Strauss or Syberberg are. Zittelman is propagandist for the cause, so he tries to combine a specific message with hidden German patriotism.

But there is a great difference between today's nationalism and Weimar nationalism. Weimer nationalists, for instance, attacked the new German republic, when the German Navy exhibited the old flag of the Imperial Navy. Weimar nationalists focused on the Empire; they were anti-republican; and the president of the Weimar Republic was called, in very characteristic fashion, *Reichspresident,* the Imperial President, an oxymoron. There is a parallel in contemporary Hungary: the new coat of arms has a crown, yet we are a republic. But in Weimar there was a focus on a German state. Today, the Federal Republic has no rival, as Weimar did in its opposition to a new German republic.

Carnes Lord: Thank you.

Mitchell Ash: Professor Hollander, I'm surprised that you said no one quarreled with calling the Nazi regime totalitarian. For the past thirty years, the question of whether we should properly describe the Nazi regime as a totalitarian monocracy or as a polyocracy, as Franz Neumann called it, has been central. One has to take account of the historiographical scholarship of the last thirty years before making such a statement. As to a possible explanation for the relative differences in moral

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indignation about the Nazi regime and Communism, it may be based on the fact that the murder of the *kulaks* was a class genocide, and not the kind that we associate with the murder of the Jews. Also, the *kulaks* didn't come to America afterwards and tell the world what had happened to them. It seems to me that the lack of publicity has something to do with that. And finally, not unrelated to the last point is asymmetry of power. The Soviet Union continued to exist. It had nuclear weapons. The United States had to deal with that country, whereas Nazi Germany didn't exist anymore. American historians also participated in the debate about whether Nazism is properly described as totalitarianism.

Paul Hollander: Well, in that case there is a gap in my scholarship. My general impression was that there was very little debate about it among American historians. The questions always arose, and more frequently only after the death of Stalin. Is it really a useful comparison or concept? I was not aware of comparable sources regarding the Nazis. I didn't think about the murder of the *kulaks*. But I made basically the same point when I said that Nazi Germany expected to get rid of an entire category of people, whereas the Communist, or the Chinese, campaigns of extermination were based more on class and politics. After all, people were mistreated for all kinds of reasons, not just for their social origins, or for being *kulaks*.

I also touched on your last point when I asked whether the attitudes would have been similar to those we found in regard to the Soviet Union, if Nazi Germany had had nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union had to be dealt with. Many people in the peace movement criticizing it perceived it as a new threat to peace. So I agree with all your points, except the first one.

Mitchell Ash: To Jeffrey Herf. If we were to specifically look at East Germany's de-Nazification, and not the Jewish question, the conflict would be between de-Nazification and reconstruction. Then one could compare the way members of the Nazi Party were dealt with in Eastern Germany and the way they were dealt with in West Germany. Recent research has indicated that a rather larger number of former members of the Nazi Party were integrated into East German society than the official legends would lead us to believe. So I think one way of understanding that phenomenon is that de-Nazification occurred only for a short period of time, and after that, for relatively concrete, cynical reasons, the old functionaries had to be integrated into the GDR – it was a choice between either de-Nazification or reconstruction.

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Jeffrey Herf: I agree.

Mitchell Ash: To Professor Tamas: I am amazed at what you've said. What about the new German nationalisms that seem potentially more dangerous than those weird ideas you've had such a wonderful time satirizing? I'm talking about the nationalism of the German establishment, of the Kohl government, of the folks who want to put statues by Käthe Kollwitz in the middle of Berlin and have people come and worship them. The attitude is, "Everybody died in the Second World War." And you have not talked about the rather fluid boundaries between the discourse of these extreme writers and that of the establishment.

Gaspar Tamas: Yes, I think we must solidify the fluid boundaries, otherwise it is difficult to express everything. That's a shortcoming of all intellectual discourse. It is true that this kind of intellectually undemanding German nationalism exists, but it is pretty innocuous. In my correspondence with Professor Kurzweil about my presentation for this conference, she asked me to talk about "a view from Hungary." But there's no view from Hungary; people there don't think about Germany at all. The only foreign country they think about is the United States. It's the only one that counts. My experience is of Eastern Europe. I would argue that the establishment of German nationalism, compared to the heroes of the West and the liberated East European countries, is a joke. For example: The good boy of the new Eastern Europe is Bohemia, called in an ungainly manner the Czech Republic. The Czech court has just upheld the constitutionality of the Benesh decrees, which declare the collective guilt of ethnic Germans and Hungarians in the former Czechoslovakia and order the confiscation of their goods, stripping them of citizenship and civic and human rights. These decrees were upheld a week ago by the Czech constitutional court. Ten days ago the same decrees were declared valid by the Slovak government. These decrees are fascist in character. So the fact that the German government is putting up monuments of questionable taste and even more questionable truth, it seems to me, is relatively innocent. Reconciliation can be achieved only on the basis of truth. These are lies, but they don't seem to me very dangerous.

Carnes Lord: Thank you very much.

Karola Brede: When Habermas talks of the nationalism of the German mark, he doesn't mean that everyone should have money but that, symbolically, German national identity embeds emotional distance. The term

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"constitutional patriotism" is a theoretical concept. It comes, I believe, first from Dolf Sternberger, then from Habermas, but also from Richard von Weizäcker, the last Bundespresident. The term itself represents both a compromise and a contradiction. It's a compromise between emotional identification, patriotism, and something very rational – being bound to your constitution by rational argument.

To Dr. Tamas: Could you elaborate a little more on what you call German liberalism? We have a Christian Democratic government; a Social Democratic party without a platform; and the Greens, the only innovative party in Germany. Where does liberalism come in?

To Dr. Herf: Could you elaborate on the consequences of what you were reporting about – the dealing of the Communist Party of the GDR with the Jewishness of its leading members?

Gaspar Tamas: I used Habermas's concept in loose fashion. I disagree with his description of these notions, but this leads me to a more important disagreement. The intuitive, classical notion of patriotism is not primarily emotional. Classically, patriotism is considered to be a moral virtue, namely that citizens would voluntarily perform deeds for their country, beyond the call of legal duty. That is not emotional but a realization of one's moral duty to one's political community. The idea of constitutionalism and the idea of patriotic civic virtue are not far apart. So, I don't think that there is a contradiction.

I didn't mean that liberalism as a political philosophy and a powerful doctrine is especially alive and strong in Germany. I was using the common political terminology, by calling free countries liberal democracies – countries with markets, with liberal economic policies, where people are not arrested in the night and dragged away without a warrant. In this sense, Germany is a perfectly respectable country, although I don't think German politicians are particularly imaginative. And I don't think that the Greens or the PDS are very imaginative.

Jeffrey Herf: I will make four points. West German democracy benefited from the division of the country because it eliminated the Communist Party from electoral politics. As a result, the Social Democratic Party had no opposition to its left and was able to win national elections. One of my major concerns about a unified Germany is whether Italy's past is Germany's future. That is, whether the existence of a PDS plus a Social Democratic Party will make it impossible for the democratic left, a center-left government, to win a national election, and whether right-wing or moderate right-wing governments will be permanently in power, leading inevitably to corruption, inefficiency, and an

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erosion of faith in democratic institutions. I think that is a serious problem for unified Germany which we haven't talked about.

Second, in a very horrible and ironic manner, the destruction of the German Jewish community also facilitated the democratization of Germany after the war, because it eliminated the Jewish question as a problem of German democratic politics. Democratic politicians did not have to deal with ethnic problems and religious conflicts, with anti-Semitism, and with Jews who actually lived in Cologne, or Frankfurt, and so on. But unified Germany, as was the Federal Republic before it, is a multiethnic democracy. And the Westernization of German democracy is not yet complete. It won't be complete until German citizenship laws eliminate any connotation of ethnicity or blood related to citizenship. When citizenship is no longer connected to *Deutschesvolk* of one kind or another, then I think the second major test for the future of German democracy will have been passed.

Third, the problem of anti-Communism and criticism of Communism has a distinctive history in West Germany that it doesn't have, say, in the United States. And although I have been a critic of the West German left and its reluctance to criticize the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s, I also think that it is important to keep in mind that the Cold War against the Soviet Union in the 1950s evoked, consciously or unconsciously, the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. So, to criticize the Soviet Union, with the same passion you might, was for most of the younger generation of West Germans emotionally impossible. While I don't agree with them, I can understand it.

Finally, as an historian, I try to get as much as possible of the truth about the past. Our knowledge is growing. It is important that democratization be based upon justice. This means looking at the past with open eyes and coming to terms with past injustices that have been done. This entails open and honest discussion of what happened and who did what. I think of Habermas at the age of sixteen, listening to the radio broadcasts of the Nuremburg trials, hearing Robert Jackson and Telford Taylor and Hardley Shawcross tell it like it was: dates, facts, places, who did what. That had an enormous impact on him. And when I think of Günter Grass's satire of Martin Heidegger's obscurantism, I think it probably had an enormous impact on Grass as well. It is important to try to establish what happened. Important intrinsically, as well as to the stability of democracy.

Carnes Lord: Thank you very much. Two more questions.

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Wildried Von Bredow: I was a bit provoked by Mitchell's comment about neo-nationalism in Germany, about the boundaries between this kind of intellectual, fringe neo-nationalism, which indeed goes back to the twenties (one can quote, for instance, the prominence of Karl Schmidt), and the national feelings of the political establishment. I think there is a boundary here. There is a deep difference, probably not so much as far as taste is concerned. As to the bronze cast of a Käthe Kollwitz Pietà, which was added to the memorial on Unter den Linden, in the east of Berlin, by Helmut Kohl, there are many people who are opposed to its being appropriated as a nationalist symbol.

The most important political question is the question of Europe, the unification of Europe. Today, you still find a consensus among the political establishment in Germany that the construction of a unified Europe above the level of nations is a most important goal. As long as this remains so, I think one can be reassured about the so-called German nationalist debate. The Germans have to find new answers to the question, "Who are we, what do we want?" This general debate will continue, without changing the political system. As it is, the right-wing parties don't find much resonance in general elections, even though a lot of silly things are going on, and silly arguments are again being put on the table. Thank you.

David Rosenberg: Three years ago, Professor Kurzweil and *Partisan Review* orgainzed a conference on Eastern Europe, during which Czeslaw Milosz remarked that when he published his great book, *The Captive Mind,* when he was in exile in Paris, he was treated as something like a combination of lunatic and agent for the CIA. And he said that the book was, ironically, no help in his getting a position at Berkeley, either. I was quite shocked to hear that. I know, Professor Hollander, that you've written on this issue, and I thought your remarks were directed toward the United States rather than toward Germany. Do you think that people who have lived through that period and have experienced such things still would be reluctant in academic circles to make a strong claim for their experience? Will they continue to find this kind of resistance to the true story of what took place in the Soviet sphere?

Paul Hollander: What period do you refer to?

David Rosenberg: Obviously, Solzhenitsyn is representative. What surprised me was that in an American academic context, a book which I studied in high school in 1960, a definitive document, was no help to

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Milosz in getting an academic appointment. Obviously, there was real resistance and resentment that he had written *The Captive Mind*. Do you think that this continues to be a problem?

Paul Hollander: Indeed, I primarily had Americans rather than Germans in mind. I think this is still continuing. The Communist ideas still have a certain respectability which the bad things committed in their name cannot entirely undermine. Some people say, "Isn't it wonderful that the Soviet Union has collapsed, so now these ideas are no longer tarnished by bad practice." I think that the matter applies to large segments of the intelligentsia. You mention Solzhenitsyn. A lot of hostility to him had to do with the fact that he was evoking moral categories and was prophetically condemning the people associated with Communism and the Soviet Union. A lot of Western intellectuals and opinion-makers found this difficult to accept. I think that there remains an underlying reluctance to make a moral distinction between the Nazi and Communist evils.

Carnes Lord: Thank you. Edith, I think you get the last word.

Edith Kurzweil: I just wanted to add something to Dr. Hollander's point. Around *Partisan Review,* we frequently have had such experiences. I organized a conference at Boston University in 1981; we brought together many of the dissidents, who then were living in Paris and Munich and in different cities in America. Some still were afraid of the KGB, and seemed, literally, paranoid. They attacked me during the first fifteen minutes we met, asking me unpleasantly, "Why did you bring us together?" They were worried that they would be killed if they stayed in the same hotel or took the same plane from Boston to New York. I had to explain that we admired their courage, and so on. Then they relaxed a bit. Among the people in the audience, many did not quite believe what the dissidents were saying. In the mid-1980s, I had a nineteen-year-old woman from Russia as an au pair. She was a student at Wellesley College, and when she told her roommates how things had been in Russia, they accused her of being anti-Soviet, of not understanding what was going on there. I could go on. This general view is pervasive – which, I think, Paul Hollander was trying to convey.

Carnes Lord: Thank you all again, and I'd like to thank the panelists. We will now adjourn, and there will be a reception at Alumni House, which you are all welcome to attend.

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Session Four: How Can the New Germany Defuse Its Neighbors' Fears?

Patrick Kelly: I am Associate Professor of History at Adelphi University, and I want to welcome you to this morning's sesssion of our conference, which promises to be as interesting as yesterday's discussions. First we will hear from Vladimir Tismaneanu, whose presentation will be on "Between Melancholy and Anger: Memories of German Re-volutions." He is on the faculty of the University of Maryland, College Park, and he is Associate Director of the Center for the Study of Post-Communist Societies there. He is the author of *Reinventing Politics: Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel*. He will be followed by Ljiljana Smajlovic, who will speak on "A Former Yugoslav's Perception of the New Germany." A prominent political journalist and foreign affairs editor of Belgrade's leading independent weekly, she is currently a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center. We will conclude with Marta Halpert's views of "A Burdened Legacy: Austrian Identity Between Economic Embrace and Effective Emancipation." She writes for *Newsweek, Neue Züricher Zeitung, Die Weltwoche,* and *Der Standard,* among other publications.

Vladimir Tismaneanu: Like other countries that broke with Leninism in 1989, united Germany has encountered enormous difficulties in mastering the past. Demythologizations often have coincided with devastating attacks on memories which many individuals held dear. The whole legitimation myth of the GDR as an antifascist state foundered under the overwhelming and ultimately depressing evidence that it had been nothing but a police-controlled universe based on domination, surveillance, and moral dereliction. This, in turn, created frustration among Western intellectuals who had long resented or at least questioned the "anti-Communist legitimation myth" intensely exploited by the elite of the FRG during the Cold War. With the demise of the GDR, united Germany has had to redefine its own *raison d'être* beyond the exhausted ideological claims to antifascism and anti-Communism. For many Western critical intellectuals the fixation on the *Stasi* legacy has played into the hands of the neoconservative circles and entailed the danger of exonerating, in the words of Habermas, "die zweite Vergangenheit, the Nazi Vergangenheit" ("the second past, the Nazi past"). One-dimensional focus on *Stasi* terror can thus lead to equalizing comparisons between the first and the second dictatorships.

The problem of political (or corrective) justice has plagued transi-

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tions to democracy in most post-Leninist countries: If the revolution is to be liberal, then the rule of law should prevail over any revengeful temptation. On the other hand, the proponents of de-Communization ask, what is to be done in order to repair undeniable historical and moral damages, wounds, and injuries? Recently, a *New York Times* editorial addressed new revelations of guilt by the Argentine military for thousands of *desaparecidos* during the "dirty war," and insisted that the truce between the former tormentors and the former victims could not be effective if it was based on shameful silence.

For all the former dictatorial regimes (leftist or rightist), the problems of memory and justice are inextricably linked: No liberal, open society can be founded, and endure, on lies, cynicism, hypocrisy, suppressed memories, and lack of repentance. Social peace (or reconciliation) cannot be established on either vindictive furies or pseudo-compromises between victims and victimizers. In all these countries, until 1989, a system based on psychological and political repression functioned in accordance with a utopian model of social development: If the persons who experienced its hardships are to solve their moral and political dilemmas, truth about the past should become a public good, fully accessible to all citizens. This is of course difficult, but not impossible. It is also necessary if the demons of the deposed tyrannies are to be finally exorcised. Ambiguities about the past, blurring distinctions and insinuating a kind of romanticized vision of the *ancien régime*, have been proposed by former Communists in their efforts to restore their image. A strategy meant to keep the record straight and counter the historical revisionism so alluring in times of political and moral crisis is thus extremely important. What all these societies need is the recuperation of their traumatized memory, coming to terms with their genuine past, overcoming the self-serving mythologies of victimization.

The German treatment of the former GDR leaders and the Communist legacies in general is in many respects unique. So far, several former Politburo members (the "unmagnificent seven"), including Egon Krenz, Erich Honecker's short-lived successor as SED boss and chief ideologue Kurt Hager, himself a former Spanish Civil War veteran, are on trial for crimes against their fellow citizens. Because of their orders, over six hundred East Germans who tried to escape to the West were either shot dead or blown to bits at what the SED propaganda depicted as the border between socialism and capitalism. Wishing to live under capitalism, for Honecker, Krenz and their comrades, was a crime to be most severely punished. Now, when they are brought to trial, there are many who protest and say that sending these decrepit bureaucrats to jail

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would not help anybody. The viewpoint of the victims is thus dismissed as narrow-minded and intolerant. On the other hand, in all the other former Communist countries, many ask whether social peace can be attained in the absence of justice. Can an authentic, non-authoritarian left develop unless the former Communists accept responsibility for what they did to their subjects? What kind of morality would justify universal amnesty, and how can one prevent the triumph of amnesia? Can the past be treated as an alien continent, a forgotten province of unspeakable nightmares and unavowable treasons? The late Ferenc Feher liked to quote Max Weber, according to whom it would take one hundred years after the October Revolution for socialists to again acquire an honorable name. How many years have to pass after the collapse of the SED-Stasi *bestiarium* (Feher's term for the Communist experiment) that had masqueraded as the inheritor of Schiller, Hegel, Marx, Mehring, Liebknecht, Luxemburg, and the noblest German humanist traditions? Whereas in the other countries the former leaders have largely been beneficiaries of a philosophy of forgiveness (which, of course is not tantamount to forgetfulness), in the former GDR the de-Stasification and de-Communization apparently have continued unabated. This obviously is different from most of the other former Soviet-style societies. The last foreign minister of Communist Hungary, Gyula Horn (a reconstructed Marxist), is currently his country's prime minister. In Romania none of the former Politburo members who endorsed Ceausescu's order to shoot against the Timisoara and Bucharest demonstrators is still in prison. In Bulgaria, after post-Communist party leader Andrei Lukanov was imprisoned on charges of corruption, the Bulgarian Socialist Party won the elections and its leader, thirty-five-year-old Zhan Videnov has become Europe's youngest premier. The former party boss Todor Zhivkov enjoys a luxurious version of house arrest and proudly defends the record of his thirty years of dictatorship. Even the Czech lustration laws, perhaps the most drastic in the whole region, could not fully preempt the resurrection of the former Communists. An unrepentant Leninist, Miroslav Stepan, the former Prague party boss involved in the November 1989 anti-student repression, is now creating his own wing of the Communist Party, adamantly critical of the market economy and open society.

I want to be understood: there is no ironclad determinism that would make this phenomenon an inescapable trend, and by no means do I see the post-Communists' return (in different forms and with different impacts) as a mere restoration of the *status quo ante*. The Leninist party-state has been forever abolished. But what remains, and takes a certain ironical revenge on the current generation, is the Leninist (not only

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German or Prussian!) style of political obedience, the expectations that the state be a kind of paternal figure, the resentment toward parliamentary debate (perceived as chaotic, strident, and frivolous) and the nostalgia for order and discipline. The moral costs of the transition to a *Reichtsstaat* society cannot be ignored: many of the former victims have had to accept this philosophy of restraint as a price for the establishment of an order where past abberrations would not be repeated. The phenomenon has been described by Adam Michnik as "velvet restoration" and by Stephen Holmes as "the end of de-Communization." A stronger term, that refers to the general disparagement of the former dissidents, the politics of despair and ressentiment, and the rise of ethnocentric populism, would be "velvet counterrevolution." What Habermas and other observers of the former GDR have noticed is a trend in the entire region: the marginalization of the former dissidents, the discrediting of the principles of anti-politics as they were formulated by the anti-authoritarian groups and movements of the 1980s. But ideas do not simply vanish, and sometimes they enjoy an underground, invisible life. The ethos of the civil society as it had emerged in the anti-totalitarian struggle has survived as memory and could one day inspire new forms of political practice in all these countries. After all, liberal democracy in its parliamentary conventional forms has experienced its own serious troubles, in spite of the triumphalist chorus of the "end of history" school.

Why is the experience of the former GDR important? I suggest at least two compelling reasons: first, that the special nature of the revolution that took place in that country is in many respects a continuation of the aborted revolutionary upheavals of 1918 and 1953; and second, there are the peculiarities of the transition, where the final destination is basically known. This relative certainty about the future and the pace of reform makes the East German case different from other East European countries where, as Philippe Schmitter has argued, we still don't know whether liberal democracy will be the *terminus ad quem*. At the same time, I think that the collapse of the Leninist world has dramatically changed the nature of the perspectives of the first world as well. For the first time since the 1930s, the liberal democratic project can be seriously jeopardized in its own fortresses. Ernest Gellner, in his recent book *Conditions of Liberty,* is right: civil society (understood as the conjunction of political pluralism, state of law and market economy) has rivals both outside and inside its boundaries. What is at stake is the future of reason as it has taken shape in the liberal order inspired by the Enlightenment. Once again, the politics of anger, malaise, and despair seems to get the

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upper hand. In other words, we can ask ourselves whether the ethnic animosities and even hatred, as well as the collectivist aspirations that also have invaded the once safely secluded West may accelerate an already latent crisis in the liberal societies and cause serious damage to the self-confidence of democratic polities.

On these particularly complex and disturbing issues, the question is, what to do with the former elites? What are the borders between justice and vengeance? How does one now discuss the issue of guilt and responsibility, especially regarding the crimes of the fifties? Most of the witnesses are either dead or have long since forgotten the details of those events. The Germans have been engaged in their *Sonderweg*. The initial civic revolution turned into national reunification, diligently explored by Timothy Garton Ash. And the need to invent new political institutions and patterns of attitudes was supplanted by the adjustment to the existing ones, imported from the West without too much soul-searching. To discuss whether other avenues could have been taken that were foolishly and selfishly ignored by Kohl has become a tempting but futile exercise. The fact remains that the GDR was problematic from all viewpoints (national, political, ethical), regardless of a certain fascination the West German intelligentsia may have nourished. As Reiner Kunze, the former dissident writer, agrees, "many intellectuals in Germany just didn't want to face one embarrassing reality: namely, our second sinful descent into totalitarianism in this century. . . . There are those who are invincibly immune to reality – especially if it's a matter of saving their ideology and their utopia intact." What kind of society, then, was the GDR? It was, after the Nazi revolution, the second attempt to create an ideological state on German territory. It was rooted in the legend of a class-divided nation: progressive versus reactionary, anti-Nazi versus "state monopoly capitalism." At the same time, for many denizens of that country, fictitious as it was, ideology became a reality. Whatever one may think of people like Christa Wolf or Stephan Heym, they decided to live in that country and fight for the liberalization of the existing system. In other words, for them, as for many of their readers, the GDR had acquired an identity and therefore had a future. Not surprisingly, therefore, the denial of any value or dignity to the people's past experience, the erasure of institutional memory gave rise to humiliation and anger. The arrogant Western treatment has been particularly resented in the areas of culture, education, justice, and the military, where complete and often indiscriminate purges led to the elimination of most of those who had been active (directly or indirectly) in the symbolic reproduction of the old system. This is the result of the very different

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nature of political and cultural transition in that part of Germany. Unlike the other East European countries, the GDR was integrated (some people would argue absorbed) into a consolidated democratic culture. The birthpangs of democracy were less excruciating than in Romania or Poland. Whatever the price of privatization and the rise of unemployment, the East German economy was the only economy in the former Soviet bloc to fully enjoy assistance from a prosperous Western country. Also unlike in the other Eastern European countries, the pensioners are not among the worst off and therefore resentful categories. The full conversion of pensions from Eastern to Western currency provided if not a high living standard, at least a reasonably decent one.

The result however has been the emergence of a hybrid political culture. On the one hand, the FRG constitutional, civic culture has been affected by the merger with the predominantly authoritarian traditions of East Germany, and with its lingering memories, affinities, and loyalties. On the other hand, the former GDR citizens, after the initial euphoria, increasingly developed feelings of malaise, disaffection, humiliation, shame, and anger. The unification created a situation no other East European country has experienced: a gap between first- and second-class citizens. In other countries, the distinction may be between former Communist party members and non-members. In Germany, in addition to this political differentiation, there is the distinction between Easterner and Westerner. The latter has little patience for the former's self-pity and awkwardness. The former found out that brotherhood does not entail empathy. In many respects, the psychological makeup of citizens in the new East German *Länder* is closer to the Hungarian and Polish experiences than to the Western managerial mentalities.

The initial obsession with the past, the eagerness to discover the secret police files, expose the informers, stigmatize *délateurs,* the post-Vichy-style anti-collaborationist frenzy, has subsided. East Germans feel that their Western fellow countrymen have little understanding for their psychological afflictions. Their voices are not heard, their plights are neglected, their resistance has been assigned to the memory hole. One has to think again what kind of state the GDR had been. It was of course the opposite of what it pretended to be. The claim to be the "incarnation of Marx's dreams" was just preposterous. Ulbricht and Honecker were dull Stalinist bureaucrats with little understanding of the real working class or the Marxist intelligentsia's utopian expectations. The persecution of Wolfgang Harich, Robert Havemann and Wolf Biermann says a lot about their ruling elite's allergy to neo-Marxist critical

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thought. The Frankfurt School had long been attacked as a bourgeois infiltration within the revolutionary ideology. At the same time, the ideal if not the real GDR responded to the hopes and anguishes of a large segment of the German radical intelligentsia. The GDR, I suggest, succeeded in creating its own political culture, with a perpetual tension between the ideal and the real symbolic patterns, and between the official creed and the subterranean alternative leftist and liberal aspirations. Quite frequently, the critique of the existing socialism by dissidents was undertaken in the name of the ideals advocated by Freudo-Marxist or Luxemburgist radicals. For many reasons, including biographical ones (as in the case of Jürgen Fuchs and Wolf), there was a strong belief that the GDR represented the chance to experiment with a non-capitalist and non-Leninist version of social justice. That Honecker and his clique were not able to live up to this hope was obvious, but the idea was to try it (or to invent it) against them and against all odds. Dissidents criticized the existing GDR in the name of an ideal one, not on behalf of pan-German or liberal bourgeois values.

Like most dissident movements, the GDR opposition was rooted in hopelessness: its goal was the creation of the post-Communist order. Dissent was, for all practical purposes, the presence of an absence, a specter of the impossible anti-politics. But this was a creative despair, one that refused to acquiesce to the scornful logic of the *nomenklatura* and offered a romantic escape from the bureaucratic, oppressive ennui, through engagement in civic activism. Dissent was a way to assert one's dignity and inner freedom, not simply quixotic reverie.

In no other country has dealing with historical memory become such a thorough-going activity. The Gauck Commission was the most serious attempt to investigate the scope and impact of the secret police. It explored, methodically and unabatedly, the rules, the names, the influence on human minds and behaviors associated with the *Stasi*. Some argue that this commission had the characteristics of a victors' operation. The former GDR was thus seen as a territory brutalized by an alien force, thereby ignoring the strong identification between certain groups in that country and their imposed, but nevertheless real *Lebenswelt*. Second, the general indictment of the GDR experience tended to share in the general illusion that there was nothing worth remembering or preserving. Has the "solidarity of the culpable" (a term proposed by Czech sociologist Jirina Siklova) totally obliterated the memory of the autonomous search for a democratic polity, against blind regimentation, moral conformity, and Prussian-style militarism? We are too far from the initial moment of November 1989, perhaps the only victorious revolu-

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tion in German history. Whatever happened to the ardor of the human rights movements? Is it true that dissidents were isolated, unpopular intellectuals and that their movements were strongly penetrated by secret police? Does this make their message less intense and morally attractive? Since when is popularity the litmus test of ethical validity?

As Habermas put it, "While after 1945 the resistance movement of 20 July, however selectively it was described, was incorporated into the founding idea of the Federal Republic, today the historical accomplishment of the civil rights movement of East Germany is slipping from national memory. It should have been possible for it to attain a fitting symbolic representation in the founding of a new republic. Because the very discussion of such a founding was anxiously warded off, the cry 'We are the people' has remained without a lasting echo. This is another reason why those East German compatriots, who feel hurt by a process of unification that was demeaning in many respects, are turning to the past. They are clinging to old identities instead of drawing self-assurance from their own contribution to democracy."

The issue indeed is what past these post-Leninist societies have to come to terms with. In the case of the GDR (and arguably Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Croatia, countries that during World War II had belonged to the Axis), the process of de-Communization encompasses the equally important process of de-fascization. In some of these countries, anti-Communism has been an excellent device for covering staunch nationalist sentiments and nostalgia for authoritarian solutions. In the case of the GDR elites, especially for the first generation, one cannot dissociate their commitment to this country and their memories of Nazi atrocities and anti-Communist persecutions. The refusal of the East German state to admit any culpability or responsibility for the Hitlerite disaster and the Holocaust was part of the fiction or myth on which this society was built: that it represented the progressive, anti-capitalist, peace-oriented part of the German heritage. "The stronger socialism, the more secure the peace." This slogan was posted everywhere in the former GDR, on buildings, train stations, school walls, and airports.

Undoubtedly, people held these rhetorical devices in contempt. But many among the literary and intellectual elites sincerely believed in the GDR's special mission. They fought against Honecker in the name of Germany's critical Marxist, sometimes anarcho-libertarian traditions, not in the name of *Kaufhalle*. But their utopian hopes were dashed by pan-German national enthusiasm. Gregor Gysi's Party of Democratic Socialism was successful because it addressed the grievances and worries expressed by those for whom the GDR had been a *Heimat*. Its demoniza-

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tion and the ahistorical comparisons to the Nazi regime are both ludicrous and counter-productive. The anti-fascist myth left its imprint on collective memories. At the same time, precisely because of its radicalism, the successes of the Party of Democratic Socialism tend to change the main features of the post-World War II West German political culture. For the first time a strong party of leftist, neo-Marxist persuasion has emerged and is capable of challenging the centrist consensus.

The future of a stable and democratically reliable Germany is linked to its ability to incorporate the idealistic ethos of the revolutionary fervor of 1989, the redemptive mythology of the anti-Leviathan struggle of the genuine human rights and peace movements. Forgetting them, abandoning the sense of solidarity that had emerged at that time, is to deny East Germans the right to be proud of their short-lived but nevertheless noble and historically effective moments of revolt. When all is said and done, one has to admit that it was not only Western pressure, but also the moral revolution of poets, students, priests, conscientious objectors, balladeers, and actors that dispelled the political legend and the constitutional fiction called the GDR. Ignoring or discarding this legacy as quixotic cannot but deepen a certain anger among its citizens. For they need some moment of the past of which to be proud. No culture can be based on prolonged and unmitigated feelings of shame and blame. Thus, the challenge is to establish a culture of guilt and civic responsibility by admitting that East Germans have their right to memory as well. Between total forgetfulness and rabid vengeance (what Bruce Ackerman calls "endless rounds of mutual recriminations"), there is always the road of reflexive remembrance and constructive repentance.

Ljiljana Smajlovic: After listening to Vladimir talk about the Balkan burden of the GDR, it seems a minor undertaking to talk about Yugoslavia and Germany.

A year before the Berlin Wall came down, Chancellor Helmut Kohl routinely referred to the stability of former Yugoslavia as one of his government's cherished goals and "a vital condition of preserving the status of Europe." Back then, three million German tourists visited Yugoslavia every year. Approximately the same number of Yugoslavs traveled yearly to Germany to shop, do business, or visit guestworker relatives. Germany was Yugoslavia's chief trading partner. German and Yugoslav foreign ministers routinely met twice a year in informal settings, preferably mountain and sea resorts, issuing formal communiqués that invariably praised the two countries' friendly relations and mutual understanding. World War II was but a distant bad memory. The deutschmark had undisputed primacy on the Yugoslav market. In Yugoslavia, everyone

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wanted German goods and German living standards.

A year after the Wall went down, at a similar conference on Germany, I might have still been able to give "A View from Yugoslavia," a single view of Germany from Yugoslavia. But one year later, the Yugoslav image of Germany fractured into as many pieces as Yugoslavia itself did. The most popular tune in the northwestern parts of former Yugoslavia in 1991 was "Danke, Deutschland," composed in recognition of Germany's pivotal role in the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. One of the prettiest islands on the Adriatic Coast, Brac, boasted a monument erected in gratitude to Hans Dietrich Genscher, the ubiquitous German Foreign Minister credited with masterminding this recognition in the face of strong opposition from most of Germany's partners in the European Community. Taverns all across Croatia were renamed "Genscher" in the Foreign Minister's honor.

In the meantime, a radically different perception of the new Germany prevailed in the so-called rump Yugoslavia. In the summer of 1992, as war raged in Bosnia, the Belgrade evening paper *Vecernje Novosti* ran a story in which the tenants of the Belgrade municipality Zvezdara expressed relief and satisfaction at the news that dog-catchers had finally captured and put to sleep a dangerous and ugly stray dog nicknamed "Genscher" by neighborhood kids. This was reported in the city section of the paper. For over a year, other sections of this paper and other government-controlled media had been filled with news stories, political serials, and commentaries about reunited Germany's latest Balkan onslaught, visions of the Fourth Reich, *Drang nach Osten,* and evil conspiracies of world domination. By that time, Genscher had already resigned as Foreign Minister, but there was no love lost between the Serbs and his successor Kinkel, either. A few weeks after he was sworn into office, Kinkel made the following public pronouncement, "We have to bring Serbia to its knees." A high-ranking German diplomat in Belgrade refused to believe Yugoslav newspaper reports about Kinkel's statement, reprinted from the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. He sent a letter to Bonn to verify the newspaper reports. He did not have to wait for the official Foreign Ministry response. Kinkel repeated himself promptly, over and over again, in his first few weeks in office. To this day, Croatia swears by Germany and Serbia curses it. In the country that now calls itself Yugoslavia, the only German thing people still swear by is the deutschmark.

In 1991-1992, I was stationed in Brussels as European correspondent for a Sarajevo daily newspaper and had the opportunity to observe closely Germany's role in the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Germany had pushed assiduously for recognition of the break-away republics of Slove-

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nia and Croatia since the summer of 1991, despite the EC's publicly proclaimed policy that no unilateral acts of secession would be recognized by the international community and that there would be no recognition of new states before all issues among the former Yugoslav republics were settled in good faith. This was a time of intense bargaining, not only between Yugoslav republics at war with each other but also among the twelve European partners who were getting ready for the famous Maastricht summit. Maastricht was a success: To ensure it, Germany made significant concessions, allowing Great Britain to opt out of the Social Charter and give up its formidable currency in favor of the European Currency Unit (ECU). Payback time came seven days later, in Brussels.

The crucial moment I witnessed in Germany's drive for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia came a week after Maastricht. It was a seventeen-hour-long session of the Council of Ministers of the European Community in Brussels, beginning on December 16th and lasting until Genscher was able to extract his partners' reluctant promise to follow the German lead in recognizing Croatia and Slovenia. This finally happened between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m., the morning of December 17th, 1991. A tired but victorious Genscher emerged to announce that the foreign ministers of twelve EC countries had reached a unanimous decision to recognize the independence of all former Yugoslav republics by January 15th, 1992. He also announced that Germany would recognize Croatia and Slovenia "before Christmas."

Germany had threatened to unilaterally recognize the breakaway republics, which was an absolute taboo in the European Community. It still is, but back then the stakes somehow seemed higher, and preserving appearances mattered more. The European Community still had high hopes of salvaging its credibility in foreign affairs, although its reputation was already tarnished by the civil war in its own backyard, which it seemed incapable of ending. But it had not yet suffered utter defeat and indignity. Rather than risk Germany's breaking rank a week after Maastricht, eleven foreign ministers gave in. The very next day, the British press would call Genscher "the German bulldozer."

When Chancellor Kohl announced the EC Council of Ministers' decision to delegates of the Christian Democratic Union Congress in Dresden on December 17th, he was given an ovation. "This is a great success for us and for Germany's politics," he added. Germany had delivered. It recognized Croatia and Slovenia just as it had promised it would, before Christmas. For the sake of appearances, the decision was made official on January 15th, 1992, when the other EC countries joined. It should also be noted that the EC had taken great pains to cloak its Yugoslav policies in respectability and legality. For this purpose,

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the EC Conference on Yugoslavia brought together distinguished jurists from several European countries to make up the Badinter Commission and asked their legal opinion about issues of recognition. The commission determined that only Slovenia and Macedonia fulfilled all the requirements. Nevertheless, the foreign ministers recognized Croatia and Slovenia instead. Apparently, a deal had been struck between Genscher and his Greek counterpart Samaras: the Greeks, the Serbs' traditional allies in the Balkans, waved their objections to recognizing Croatia, and in return Germany promised Greece it would delay EC recognition of Macedonia.

The foreign ministers' meeting of December 17, 1995, as a bitter Dutch diplomat put it, off the record, to journalists, was important for Germany: it cast Germany as a superpower. Indeed, Yugoslavia's civil war was the first European crisis after the end of the Cold War and Germany's reunification. Croatia was recognized despite British and French reluctance, discontent, and resentment. Germany's aggressive action upset its European partners and was out of character. Until then, Germany had had a great deal of economic clout but little political muscle, and had always followed the French in matters of diplomacy. Now, it was in radical opposition to the plans and desires of Britain, France, and Russia.

This was an unfortunate debut. However, feeding into Serbian paranoia also sealed Bosnia's fate. Later on, the Germans argued that recognition of Croatia momentarily had stopped the fighting in Croatia. But this was somewhat disingenuous. A different sequence of events could have taken place. By December 17th, United States Secretary of State Cyrus Vance already had put the finishing touches on the terms for the Serbo-Croat cessation of hostilities, and on the Unprofor mandate in former Yugoslavia. The Vance plan was to be signed in less than two weeks. In fact, the EC recognized Croatia and Slovenia two weeks after the Vance plan became effective.

Therefore, Germany's premature recognition of Croatia had no immediate effect on the length of the war. Instead, it forced Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic to make the choice he had desperately tried to postpone, that is, to apply for recognition of Bosnia before the deadline. This put him in a highly precarious position. As he stated to Lord Carrington, "If I ask for recognition, there will be a civil war. If I don't, they'll cut my throat."

During the fall of 1991, Izetbegovic had argued during every session of the EC Conference on Yugoslavia that he was against partial solutions to the Yugoslav conflict and separate recognition for any republic – a position the EC itself had promised to take when the conference had opened in September at the Hague. Izetbegovic was wary of the Bosnian

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Serbs and afraid of their powerful patrons in Belgrade and in the JNA. The Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic had threatened that, if Bosnia were to declare its sovereignty, the Serbs would secede from it.

In those days Germany presented itself as the patron saint not only of Croatia and Slovenia but also of Bosnia. Both Kohl and Genscher had shown sympathy and respect to Izetbegovic, whom they obviously trusted. It is not quite clear whether they got Izetbegovic to agree to the early recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, but he did visit Bonn three days before Chancellor Kohl's fateful announcement. I covered that visit for the paper I was writing for at the time, and Izetbegovic had seemed a happy man at the press conference he gave after his audience with Kohl and Genscher. I have since heard that the last American ambassador to Belgrade, Warren Zimmerman, in part blamed Bosnia's fate on Izetbegovic. Zimmermann claims that Izetbegovic, unlike on earlier occasions, did not express himself to Genscher forcefully enough against Croatian recognition. Certainly, Zimmermann may know something I do not, and it is possible that Izetbegovic gave the Germans his blessing, in exchange for something.

I do not know whether Germany has come to regret its strong-arm tactics in recognizing Croatia, but since then it has defended that decision. I rather suspect that Genscher regretted it, given the fact that he probably was forced to resign because of the way he mismanaged the Yugoslav crisis. Germany came of age politically, but as soon as it did, it stood accused. A terrible war was raging in Europe, and Germany had helped bring it about. Since then, the German government has gone to great lengths to deflect this criticism. The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs has even published a booklet that serves as an apologia, the tone of which is without triumphalism and makes no mention of Kohl's "great victory for Germany and its policies." The booklet states that the EC decision was unilateral, not German but European. It rejects responsibility for the Bosnian war, pointing out, accurately, that it was the United States which led the drive for the recognition of Bosnia.

In June 1993 U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher accused Germany of responsibility for the war in the former Yugoslavia. The Western countries have not stopped their mutual recriminations and accusations ever since. Once war in Bosnia broke out, Germany for the most part kept a low profile. Instead, it has worked to forge a new strategic relationship with the U.S. and has done its best to secure, promote, and preserve the one triumph of American diplomacy in former Yugoslavia, the Muslim-Croat federation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of course, Germany cannot be held responsible for the prejudices of other nations or ethnic groups. The Yugoslav peoples have destroyed their

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own country, and the demise of this multicultural and multi-ethnic state cannot be laid at Germany's door. But every prejudice the Serbs ever held against the Germans has been reinforced. Through its reckless actions during the 1991-1992 Yugoslav crisis, Germany has reinforced anti-German sentiment in the Serb part of the Balkans.

Patrick Kelly: Thank you. Now, to Marta Halpert.

Marta Halpert: The vital decision about which road Austria should take into the next century was substantially influenced by the legendary Viennese potato salad. More precisely, by the semantic difference in the German and Austrian expressions for this rich side-dish, which is served with the Viennese *Schnitzel*. What may at first seem like a joke was in fact an essential factor in the referendum on whether Austria should become a member of the European Union.

This time the Austrian government read its voters correctly: The slogan "Erdäpfelsalat bleibt Erdäpfelsalat," meaning "Potato salad is still potato salad," carried the soothing message, "You, Austrian citizen, one of eight million inhabitants, will not have to change your habits - for example, calling your beloved 'Erdäpfelsalat' instead 'Kartoffelsalat' – just because eighty million Germans do so." In June 1994, more than two-thirds, exactly sixty-seven percent of Austrians voted in favor of EU membership, the highest endorsement of EU membership by any European country.

The fear of "Germanization," namely of losing the singular Austrian touch in language, culture and especially the *savoir vivre* was evident. No other partner in the EU could be a bigger threat to Austrian identity, especially cultural identity and self-esteem. The Italians could become competitors on the wine market, the French probably win the fight for gourmet cheese. But only German publishers would claim successful Austrian writers – like Peter Handke – as their own, by presenting them as German authors in their catalogues.

This is neither petty chauvinism nor modern-style nationalism on the part of Austria. There are two genuine reasons for this feeling: the people's memory of numerous painful stretches in German-Austrian history, and the enormous efforts to establish unmistakaeble identity for this small country, whose viability had been put into question in 1918. This led to a complex and extremely ambivalent relationship.

I will divide my remarks into three sections by examining the close link between the German and Austrian economies; recalling the historical events responsible for the mutual perception and opinionated

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feelings on both sides; and looking at Austria's new position and tasks in Central Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989.

"Austrians will fail to notice the sellout of their industry or real estate, because they will be watching over the correct Austrian pronunciation at their beloved Burgtheater," a young Austrian economist sarcastically observed. He was commenting on the ongoing self-delusion of the average Austrian regarding the ever-growing German financial participation in local industry, trade, media, and so on. The figures speak clearly: Before its entry into the EU, Germany was Austria's most important trade partner, and it remains so today. Forty percent of Austria's foreign trade is with Germany – including the new *Länder*. The rest of the European community accounts for an additional twenty percent. The U.S. and Switzerland each represent only about four to five percent. Machinery, high-tech products, and the motor industry rank highest among exports and imports. But Austria's tourism industry would look pretty sad without German guests. In 1994, 67.2 percent of all the tourists staying in Austria at least overnight were Germans. Austria is the favorite holiday and sightseeing destination for its big neighbor. This probably provides one of the reasons for the various frictions. Austrian hoteliers are not denying the irresistible charm of the strong deutschmark, and they are the ones who cater mostly to German visitors. For instance, they rename the dishes they serve from the original Austrian-German to the German-German expression.

Still, the inhabitants of small resorts and villages often feel invaded by the Germans, and not only by the financial power of the tourists. The slow sell-out of Austrian land to Bavarians, for example, those who could afford a flat or chalet in the lovely Tyrolean Alps – using it sometimes only a few weeks during the year – turned into a delicate and sometimes even a serious problem. Many small Alpine communities did not know how to stop this development. Now they have found a solution, which is in accordance with EU regulations. A small community that does not want to become a ghost city can deny residency to outsiders, but only without discriminating against foreigners. Thus, the request of a person from Munich or from Salzburg must be handled in the same way.

Let's look at the media. German money keeps the Austrian newspapers going. Four Austrian dailies with a readership of roughly three and a half million (which accounts for more than half of the adult population) are financed by up to fifty percent of German capital. These are the two daily tabloids, *Kronenzeitung* and *Kurier,* and the two quality papers, *Der Standard* and *Tiroler Tageszeitung*. The majority of weeklies and

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monthlies, such as *Profil, Trend, Wirtschaftswoche,* and *News,* could not exist without their German partners.

Still, in the subconscious of the average citizen, all of these publications are "typically Austrian." At least until now, German money has not openly or visibly influenced editorial policy. In fact, currently Austrian state-owned television and radio are reacting to the powerful attack by German cable, satellite, and private stations on Austrian households. They are trying to stop this influence with a multitude of Austrian versions – or rather copies – of successful German programs. It is conceivable that the effort to win back the television consumer with the homely, familiar melody of the Austrian language – vis-à-vis the tough Prussian staccato – might even succeed.

About fifty percent of Austria's industrial output is being produced by companies owned by foreigners. Among them, German firms such as Siemens, BMW, and Henkel hold the largest share. And the process of internationalization – others may call it sell-out – is not yet over. Between 1992 and 1994, twenty-four important Austrian industrial companies changed ownership. Half of them are now owned by German companies.

But this development is not one-sided. Austrian companies are ranked third among foreign investors in the new *Länder* - having taken over one hundred East German companies from *Treuhandanstalt*. They have established about three hundred local firms or branch offices comprising forty thousand employees and a capital investment of two and a half billion deutschmark. Austria has the leading position even in the area of construction. The Maculan holding company is the most important foreign investor in the former East Germany and employs fifty-five hundred people.

Why then should Austria – the eighth richest country in the world – have a minority complex, with its yearly economic growth of two and a half to three percent, its inflation-rate of a negligible two and a half percent, its unemployment rate of six percent (among the lowest in the EU), social stability, and low crime rate? The answer lies in European history. Although I do not want to reiterate this history and go back to the revolution of 1848, or the Prussian-Austrian war at Königgrätz in 1866, I will briefly glance at the developments in this century.

The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in the autumn of 1918 was not only due to the defeat in World War I. The internal weaknesses of the dual empire never really allowed Austria to solve the problems of its multi-national and multi-ethnic minorities in its huge territory. This contributed to the catastrophe, since some of those countries

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and regions remained silent volcanoes, erupting recently in the former Yugoslavia and still holding enough explosive issues to blow up the entire Balkans. Morever, the last emperor of Austria, Kaiser Karl, abdicated on November 11, 1918. And the very next day the republic called "Deutsch-Österreich" was proclaimed.

The word "German" in the name of the new republic was essential. It actually confirmed that Austria had lost huge territories – to Italy, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland – and was eager to keep at least the German-language enclaves. But the peace treaty of Saint-Germain became a source of great disappointment. Austria lost even South Tyrol and the German-speaking Bohemian areas.

The tragic nickname for this amputated empire became "Der Staat, den keiner wollte" ("the state that nobody wanted"). In 1919 the victorious allies of World War I denied "Deutsch-Österreich" the *Anschluss* – annexation – to the *Deutsche Republik*. Still, very few Austrian politicians of that period believed then that Austria would be a viable state within its own reduced boundaries.

Even the Social Democrats, led by Viktor Adler and Otto Bauer, erased the *Anschluss* paragraph from the party's program only after Hitler came to power. The Christian Socialists – then in power – undoubtedly believed after 1934 that Austria was at least the "second-best" German state. Many of these insecurities and uncertainties made it easy for politicians, and for the population as well, to drift into Hitler's arms. Many people helped prepare for the Austrian disaster.

Despite the fact that historical photos show only the triumphant welcome of Hitler on the Heldenplatz in March 1938, the *Anschluss* – according to then valid international law – was coerced. True enough, not with bullets, but through extreme political pressure and blackmail.

"The Austrians are masters of making the world believe that Hitler was a German and Beethoven an Austrian" is a reproach one still hears frequently from Germans. This undercurrent of resentment stems from the fact that many Germans still believe that Austrians had the chance to hide from their responsiblities in World War II and to deny their share of the atrocities committed by the Hitler regime. This version of history, of course, also was furthered by Austrian behavior and policy, in the country's acting, without hesitation, as the "first victim" of the Hitler regime, a posture supported by the Moscow Declaration of November 1, 1943. In this document the three allies, Great Britain, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, reiterated their interest in a "free and sovereign Austria" – as one of the aims in the postwar order.

The coerced *Anschluss* was declared null and void. But at the same

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time Austria was reminded of its responsibility for participation in the war. There was a clause to the effect that before a final postwar arrangement, Austria would be judged by its own contribution to the liberation of the country. The small but genuine role of the Austrian Resistance Movement, the beginning of the Cold War, and skillful Austrian diplomacy made possible the state treaty of May 1955. Ten years after the end of the war, Austria regained its sovereignty, and for forty-five years, remained the only country which Russian soldiers had left voluntarily. In November 1955 the Austrian Parliament passed a law declaring "its everlasting neutrality." Austria relinquished the idea of joining any military pact.

"The Germans rigidly opposed these negotiations on neutrality status," writes Austrian historian Oliver Rathkolb. "In 1955, they were panicking, fearful that following the Austrian example, the Soviet Union might get the idea of neutralizing Germany, suggesting this deal as a prize for the reunification of the two Germanies." Germany could not effectively block the Soviet-Austrian agreement in the spring of 1955, and remained divided.

In the years that followed, the relationship between Germany and Austria went through many stages. At times, it was filled with resentment and with a bit of envy. Despite being preoccupied with their own successful *Wiederaufbau* (reconstruction of the country) – the Germans did look over its neighbor's fence: Here is that lucky, small country; it's free, and it's profiting from the German *Wirtschaftswunder* – the economic miracle – with the essential help of the American Marshall plan. The Germans have always treated the Austrians with a bit of aloofness, although they secretly and incessantly have admired them for their *Gemütlichkeit* – for obviously taking life a little easier. A bit amused, Germans watched Austrians play the role of the ever-neutral mediator in the 1970s. Chancellor Bruno Kreisky's interest in and knowledge of foreign policy, and his engagement in the Middle East conflict, gave Austrians a feeling of importance, even of being influential in the world.

The fiftieth anniversary of Austria's Second Republic is being celebrated this year. But the last five years have drastically changed its inner and outer realities. From the "Insel der Seligen," "island of the blessed," as the Pope once put it, at the edge of the Iron Curtain, it was swirled into the center of Central Eastern Europe. German reunification started in Austria. In late summer 1989, the first wave of East Germans came via Hungary into Austria. The barbed wire was cut at the Czech-Austrian and Hungarian-Austrian borders. The euphoria of the first weeks subsided and made room for the tough realities. The tourists from the East were

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first welcomed as hungry consumers, but shortly after much disliked as competitors on the labor market. Suddenly, some Austrians proudly discovered their roots in Bohemia and Slovakia. Others were frightened by the changes: Crime and traffic pollution were unpleasant side-effects. For many Austrians the Iron Curtain had also represented a wall of security.

But these are petty concerns compared to the beneficial economic changes. Austria has profited from the political *Wende* in the neighboring countries. Exports have soared, consulting services and joint ventures are booming. Many multinational companies coordinate their activities in the East European markets from Vienna. Since Austria joined the EU, there is even less danger of being "inhaled" by Germany. The European Union offers Austria political and economic opportunities to strengthen its identity and stress its individuality also vis-à-vis Germany.

Groups of young, skeptical Austrians vehemently opposed entry into the EU, fearing that Germany could force Austria to vote with them. They will have to realize that it is the European Union alone that can diffuse their angst. Membership in the EU can help Austria free itself economically from its larger neighbor. Exporters can sell their products in thirteen other markets without any restrictions. Students may enter universities all across the continent. Austrian regions and research institutions can get money from Brussels.

The alternative to a European integration of Austria would have been a quasi-satellite status in relation to Germany: getting customs preferences from its big promoter, being vulnerable and dependent. This is also the reason why Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic want to enter the EU as fast as possible. The new Europe is perhaps not the solution to all the problems between Austria and Germany – but it at least offers the opportunity to look for solutions.

Patrick Kelly: Thank you. May I ask those from the audience to please step to the mike, identify yourselves, and keep your questions brief so everyone has a chance.

Karl Hyman: I liked what I heard. But I want to point out that Croatia was totally on the Nazi side and fought with the Germans against the Russians. Subsequently, Tito held them in rein. Historically, Yugoslavia was an artificial state, held together by a strong government. As to Austria, it welcomed the Germans. In Austria, even recently, four gypsies were murdered, and this brings back memories of the Nazi era. Romania, too, collaborated with the Germans. Its anti-Semitism is historic, and it had divisions fighting with the Nazis on the Russian front. I

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don't think that "the New Germany can defuse its neighbors' fears" for generations to come. Apparently, the Germans are still setting the tone, not the French, not the British. It is the Germans who are the loudmouths. Thank you.

Patrick Kelly: Would you like to respond first?

Ljiljana Smajlovic: I happen not to agree with the Serbs' explanations for Germany's behavior. I don't think the Nazi era is coming back, or that the Germans are attempting to reach the Mediterranean. It is unfortunate that Zagreb and Sarajevo were the cities that awaited the Germans with flowers in 1941; and that Croatia now has a president who has said that the fascist puppet state in Zagreb was a true expression of the historical yearning of the Croatian people for an independent state. This is how things appear to Serbs. Germany did not simply buckle under the pressure of its own public opinion and television images of horror, as is often said; it did not act only out of high principles and moral considerations in recognizing Croatia and Slovenia as early as it did and in the way it did. But Germany may have wanted to become a political power, not only an economic one.

Marta Halpert: It is very difficult to discuss anything from such large generalizations. I am the last one to make any apologies for Austria's behavior or its share in the past. But I think we have to differentiate and look at historical facts. About the Romany and Sinti Gypsies incident: it is not yet clear who is responsible for these murders, but they belong to a series of terrorist attacks which Austrian authorities attribute to right extremists. But one cannot use this terrible bomb attack to accuse the whole country of Austria of being a Nazi stronghold. You have terrorist attacks in the United States, and it is not always evident who the perpetrators are. But I don't think you would call the United States a terrorist country.

Vladimir Tismaneanu: A number of points. I was born in Romania. There, as in all the post-Communist countries, nationalism harks back to the 1930s. But current events are not reproductions of what happened then. I think one cannot speak of a full-fledged rehabilitation of fascism, or of Romania, for instance, as being a fascist or a Communist state, even though it has a strong authoritarian element in its political culture.

To Ljiljana Smajlovic: I think you made an important point, but I would like to warn against a perception of Germany as particularly interested in establishing its new hegemony in the former Mittel-European

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style.

Yes, Tudjman has indeed been engaged in the rehabilitation of certain abominable practices of World War II, although he himself fought against fascism. Yes, he has been involved in a kind of "moderate Holocaust revisionism." But as Ambassador Zimmerman stated in *Foreign Affairs,* Tudjman also listened to what he was told by the West. Since 1991, neither Milosevic nor Karadzic ever listened to what they were told by the West. So from time to time, as Hugh Seton-Watson said in 1939, both the Serbs and the Croats are mad.

Patrick Kelly: Next question, please.

Mitchell Ash: To Vladimir Tismaneanu: Jens Reich wrote about the self-delusions of intellectuals in Eastern Germany. He suggests that the East German dissidents were not really antipolitical but profoundly unpolitical. They insisted on a moral position and confused that with political thinking. Therefore, they could not understand the political forces that were released by the movement they themselves began, after the fall of the Berlin Wall. That is to say, the dissidents seem to have removed themselves from the political stage even in advance, as it were, of their actual physical removal. So it's not that they were unpopular, but that they had no connection with the people of East Germany.

Vladimir Tismaneanu: Yes, they had a poor perception of what the average East German citizen may have thought; however, under state socialism, communication between the dissidents of culture and society at large would have been unthinkable. The only form through which the dissidents could communicate was through the West German media, or West Berlin communities. The second form, and here I would agree, was the religious, the Protestant community. Although the Protestant, Lutheran, and Catholic communities also had many doubts about their involvement with the East German dissident movement, they actually supported it. They offered a protective shield to the peace movement, and to the conscientious objectors. But with the exception of Poland's Solidarity in its early phase, none of the dissident movements had a plan for the future. Dissident cultures are the discourses of dissent. Gaspar Tamas has been directly involved. He wrote an extremely critical piece about the dissident legacy, in *The Times Literary Supplement* last year. I think the problem of the dissident movements was that they stuck very much to human rights, which is extremely abstract. They didn't address the reorganization of economic stuctures, for example, of state-owned

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banks, and so on. Nor was it possible for them to foster this kind of vision. Since the opposition had been thoroughly defeated in the fifties, the succeeding dissidents had to emerge from within the existing Leninist culture. Thus they were the children of heresy.

Mitchell Ash: Yes, but the substitution of moral for political analysis is no monopoly of the East European dissidents. It happens in America all the time.

David Rosenberg: Much of this conference has focused on the issue of historical memory, and anger has been expressed. It reminds me of a comment of Goethe's, in the conversations with Eckermann, in which he said something to the effect that society would one day become a great hospital in which everyone would be everyone else's nurse, to help the therapeutic airing of distress.

To Ljiljana Smajlovic: Before the breakdown of Yugoslavia, I recall a piece by a Yugoslav journalist who wrote that in order to live in Yugoslavia it was necessary to suppress the memory of the past. Do you see this as one of the causes of the catastrophe that has occurred in your country?

Ljiljana Smajlovic: No, but there is the issue of national reconciliation, at the end of the war. It is true that we have never completely reconciled with our collaborationist past.

To Vladimir. First, I did not mean to imply that the current situation is like that in 1920s and 1930s Germany. I talked about the perception of Germany, not about parallels between Milosevic and Tudjman. And I did not invoke Zimmerman's name in vain by quoting only parts from the many things he has said. I mentioned this only because we do not know how the decision to recognize Slovenia was reached. I think Zimmerman was trying to convey something without saying it. But I thought the piece in *Foreign Affairs* was more self-serving than illuminating.

Vladimir Tismaneanu: I know that it is not common for an American diplomat to say, "I was wrong." And if this is self-serving, I am wondering what self-criticism is.

Christian Fleck: To Ms. Halpert, on the German domination of the Austrian media. I know a number of German journalists, and they all complain that there is something like an Austrian cultural imperialism in

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the German media. Even to the head of the German state CDF, private television means a Dutchman in the front of the camera, an Austrian behind the camera, and a German – somewhere – plugging in the lights. I'm wondering about this because as an Austrian media consumer, I'm confronted by these very contradictory attitudes. On the one hand, we worry that German media groups are buying up our newspapers and private radio stations. On the other hand, I keep hearing that if you want to get an appointment as a journalist in Germany, there always will be an Austrian ahead of you, and you will never get anywhere. What is your experience?

Marta Halpert: Well, your picture is correct but I would interpret it differently. The Germans' financial input means that they have the determining influence.

Audience Question: What could bring a viable peace to the former Yugoslavia in the not too distant future? Can outside countries contribute toward this peace?

Ljiljana Smajlovic: I really have no idea. Many mistakes that have been made come from outside. But we destroyed our country ourselves. However, once the foreign powers started mediating, they also kept their own agendas in mind.

Patrick Kelly: We will adjourn now and reconvene at eleven o'clock. Thank you very much.

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Session Five:
America and the Emerging Europe

David Gress: The participants will each speak for twenty minutes, and then we will go straight to questions from the audience. Our first panelist is Dr. Peter Rollberg, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literature at George Washington University. He is a native of the former East Germany, writes widely on German and Slavic literature and is currently editing an encyclopedia of post-Soviet literature. He will speak on "The New Sobriety: Post-Communist Intellectuals Searching for Identity." The second panelist is Professor Wilfried von Bredow, of the University of Marburg, who has written on a great variety of issues, among them the German peace movement, German foreign policy, and German national interest. He will speak on, "Are Americans Competitors or Allies of the New Germany?" Finally, our third panelist, Mitchell Ash, is Professor of History at the University of Iowa. He has written on gestalt psychology and its history in America, and was a Fellow of the Institute of Advanced Study in Berlin in 1990-1991. Now, to Professor Rollberg.

Peter Rollberg: The overall theme of this conference is the question of whether or not the reunited Germany will be willing and able to play a constructive role in Europe. In focusing only on post-Communist intellectuals, I hope to contribute to the discussion from my own East German and Soviet experiences.

The vaguely defined stratum called the German intelligentsia has been profoundly shaken by the events of the last five years. In East Germany, as in the other former Communist countries, the intelligentsia was used as a tool of the political system and lent legitimacy and continuity to core societal values. When the framework of Communist values crumbled, they became superfluous and replaceable by those who were by definition better suited for the job – Western intellectuals.

Many intellectuals in the former East Germany, have a self-image which is shared by many West German observers. Though accurate, this view turned into a stereotype and left little room for differentiation. Eventually, the two formerly separated Siamese twins became even more conscious of their own individual identities, and less aware of others. Moreover, social repositioning, economic hardship, and feelings of moral humiliation created an atmosphere of never-ending insult, and a collective denial of responsibility for what had happened in the GDR and what now is going on in the new *Länder*. Intellectuals are expressing frustration over the outcome of the *Wende*.

Each side holds naive notions of the other's history before 1989. This

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is somewhat surprising since, after the Helsinki treaty of 1975, millions of people were able to travel between the two halves of the country. What, then, did West Germans see when they visited the East? Only hard-working laborers happily driving their Trabants? Deteriorating houses populated with humble, hospitable people cautiously complaining to them about the Party regime? Did anybody notice the incompetence of many East Germans? The military-style education? The subservience? And what, on the other hand, did the hundreds of thousands of lucky East Germans see in the West when they visited their numerous relatives? Only the supermarket crowds? The wealth of self-confident, widely traveled people who showed pity and generosity for their Eastern kin? Did they notice the harsh professional competition? The huge debts so many well-to-do people were accumulating? The lack of moral orientation commonly lamented in the West? Apparently, the ways in which East and West Germans perceived each other was extremely selective. But to correct the image of the past, former illusions and delusions must be abandoned. Therefore, it is crucial to keep the *Stasi* archives open to everyone interested in the past.

At present, the German public appears to have little gratitude for the liberation of East Germany from Communist rule. When observing the disregard for freedom and the newly acquired individual rights, Dostoevsky's question in *The Brothers Karamazov* – whether human beings really need freedom or whether a majority of them can conveniently live without it – has become more tormenting than ever. Few post-Communist intellectuals seem to enjoy the spiritual freedom which they were deprived of before. This leads us to questions about their background, to the influences which shaped them during the forty years of the GDR's existence.

The discussion of Germany's past is full of collectivist notions. Often theoretical assumptions developed prior to 1989 are used to explain the course of events throughout the countries of Eastern Europe, especially their unexpected and peaceful self-liberation. Events which took scholars and politicians by surprise are now presented as the logical result of this or that long-recognized development. Empirical evidence by persons who lived under that system is resisted. When former East Europeans come to the West, they are often confronted with definitive statements about the nature of the society in which they lived, and they rarely get the chance to raise doubts about those concepts without looking apologetic or falsifying their own history and personal biography. But facts are more ambiguous and contradictory than clear-cut ideological schemes.

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Indeed, some of the reasons leading to the disintegration of the Communist order in East Germany have not been properly investigated. For example, the symbolic power of the collapse of the Berlin Wall has overshadowed the fact that the movement did not begin in Berlin, but in Leipzig. Berlin was a comparatively privileged city in the GDR, with a better food supply and better services than the rest of the country. Yet, until 1973, Walter Ulbricht, then First Secretary of the SED, tended to favor his hometown of Leipzig, granting a sufficient supply of goods at least during the International Leipzig Trade Fair, which occurred twice a year. When Erich Honecker became General Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, the preference shifted to Berlin and to more Prussian traditions. These were not decisive factors, but they should be taken into account when explaining certain peculiarities of East Germany's Velvet Revolution.

The demonstrators in Leipzig displayed a growing political maturity and newly developing identity, and this was uplifting to watch. They maintained their calm despite the many *agents provocateurs* who were desperately trying to induce violence in order to provide the authorities with a reason to use force. Many speeches heard at what was then called the Karl-Marx-Platz had an almost cathartic effect, and the moral and spiritual superiority of the demonstrations to the Communist counter-demonstrations was apparent. Yet, when the Berlin wall was removed, this spirit weakened. The number of participants dropped by approximately half, and the boundless energy and inner drive of the demonstrators was lost. The opening of the border also was a cynical act by the Krenz administration, intended to interrupt the dynamic process of a growing political consciousness among East Germans.

In encounters with Western scholars addressing the GDR's past, one comes across statements which also appear in newspapers and television programs: that East Germany indiscriminately suppressed women; that the *Wende* in 1989 was initiated by the working class; that it was brought about by the post-materialistic generation; that it was organized by the state security itself, and so on. All too often, these assumptions are based on anecdotal evidence gathered after a short-term visit to the GDR, or from newspapers. Some intellectuals believed that the East German *Wende* was compatible with a modernized Marxist theory and could have led to a new, real kind of socialism, and that only West Germany's interference (demagogically named *Anschluss* by some) prevented such a desirable outcome of the Eastern experiment. Books like Dirk Philipsen's *We Were the People,* with intentionally selective polling, used leading questions in order to receive first-hand confirmation that a third way was

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indeed possible.

The perceptions of such well-meaning believers – among them intellectuals such as Fredric Jameson, Ronald Inglehart, and Peter Marcuse – coincide with nostalgic notions held by some East Germans who did not anticipate the radical nature of the changes, or were against them in the first place. Inevitably, the resulting clichés add little to our understanding of the functioning of a totalitarian system.

There can be little doubt that the description of these enormous social transformations is an unprecedented undertaking. But the tendency to neglect individual differentiation, and to focus on collectivist aspects, which has a long tradition in Germany, should be resisted rather than shared by Western intellectuals. After all, in Germany it was primarily this search for the traits that the others have in common, and an unwillingness to admit individual differences among members of a group, that led to skeptical or hateful attitudes toward foreigners and the rejection of the *Wessies* or *Ossies* respectively – a peculiar revival of atavistic, tribal beliefs.

It is usually assumed that the intelligentsia in Communist societies could be divided into opportunists and dissidents, and that a majority of intellectuals suffered from the absence of freedom of thought. Yet the situation was much more complex. For example, few associated with Karl Marx University participated in the Leipzig Monday demonstrations that began spontaneously in October 1989. Moreover, while some three hundred thousand people demonstrated in the streets of Leipzig against the Communist order, so-called counter-demonstrations by university professors and staff were organized at the inner court of the university, at which the risks of abandoning socialism were entertained. In fact, only a miniscule fraction of the teaching body joined the first free political organization in East Germany, *Neues Forum*. Those few who fought against the discredited and largely dishonest university administration were called *Nestbeschmutzer* – foulers of their own nest. If they expressed their criticism in public, they were often stigmatized as informers. In departmental elections, many of the former heads were reelected, this time "democratically." The changes of departmental names such as *Wissenschaftlicher Kommunismus* ("Scientific Communism") to "Sociology" became proverbial.

For a while, discoveries about the involvement of East German intellectuals in state security matters made headlines in the West. Now that this topic has become less incendiary, it seems possible to assess the facts in a tranquil fashion. At Karl Marx University, despite the link of the so-called scientific secretaries in each department with the state security,

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none of these employees were ever interrogated when such investigations still made sense. Many of them managed to secure other positions. None of the employees who were regularly involved in advising foreign guest scholars were suspected of being linked with the *Stasi*, although the likelihood was very high. Due in part to the lack of a legal basis on which to take strict measures against the Communist establishment, but also to the naiveté and carelessness of the democratic forces, the bulk of state security materials on scholars and scientists was systematically shredded or "misplaced." These failures, along with the shrewdness of the Communist functionaries, enabled the latter to cloud the extent of their real responsibility and cover up their abominable deeds.

That some of the state security informers among East German intellectuals had genuine academic merits complicated matters. For example, one of the most influential East German Slavists at the University of Jena was exposed as an active, long-term informer for the Ministry of State Security. Among other things, he had written slanderous characterizations of the prominent German poet Reiner Kunze, yet he was "democratically elected" to his former position by his subordinates and stubbornly refused to give up his academic and administrative post until Kunze himself confirmed his actions. Yet this scholar had organized the first international Mikhail Bakhtin conference in East Germany in 1984, held against the fierce resistance of Soviet officials, and he had invited such well-known scholars as Yuri Lotman, one of the world's foremost semioticists.

In another case, a professor of literature from Leipzig University had been recruited as an informer in the 1960s and 1970s. After a scandal in his family, he was regarded an unreliable source and dropped by the *Stasi*. After 1985 he became one of the active supporters of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, which took some courage in the GDR. He voluntarily retired without ever having made his former *Stasi* ties public. Another case is that of an historian who spied for East Germany in the United States in the 1970s. In 1979, when his identity was disclosed, he and his wife had to escape to the GDR. There, he became one of the first historians to introduce quantitative methods in the humanities, methods that were viewed as questionable and incompatible with orthodox Marxism-Leninism. He encountered fierce resistance from his more dogmatic colleagues, despite his substantial services to the Communist state.

Such cases were handled quite graciously, and the people involved were given a chance to make a new beginning (for example, the former spy was never persecuted). A professor of American literature, who in the mid-1980s was allowed to accept a Fulbright – an indicator of other af-

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filiations as well – had to give up her professorship after *Stasi* documents revealed that she had been an unofficial informer, yet she was then offered a position as director of an *Amerika-Haus* in a major German city. These examples point to the difficulties that arise when we reassess the past of a soft totalitarian regime: interpretations which automatically associate immoral behavior with incompetence, and vice versa, prove insufficiently subtle for the many paradoxical truths.

The hierarchical structure of East German intellectual institutions included universities, so-called pedagogical institutes designed for the education of teachers but furnished with some research potential, and the Academy of Sciences with its various institutes, which employed about twenty-five thousand people and imposed conceptual guidance on each scholarly and scientific field in other academic institutions. Privileges were graded. For example, any research assistant of the Academy of Sciences in East Berlin was allowed to cross the Iron Curtain and use West Berlin libraries for three weeks a year – something that a regular university professor could not even dream of. Equally differentiated were the levels of tolerance. For example, the mere term "humanities" (*Geisteswissenschaften*) was taboo at Leipzig University. When I used it in a 1989 article on Russian literature, it was rejected. "This is not our term," I was told. The humanities were regarded as social sciences, which meant that phenomena had to be interpreted only as socially explicable. The pedagogical institutes allowed for little digression, and independent thought was harshly punished. The Academy of Sciences, on the other hand, sometimes accommodated reprimanded intellectuals, and even some university departments were able to gain some freedom of movement.

To regularly prove one's loyalty to the regime and its ideology was of unsurpassed importance for any academic career, often more important than professional competence or the number of one's publications. The most obvious, albeit minimal sign of loyalty, was membership in the SED or in one of the parties it was allied with (*Blockparteien*). The percentage of Party members differed depending on the field; in the social sciences it was usually one hundred percent among full-time faculty, in the humanities about eighty-five percent; in medicine and the natural sciences the numbers were significantly lower. Without this membership, an academic career was possible only in such fields as mathematics or theology.

The official term for intellectuals who refused to enter the Party was a negative one: *Nicht-Genossen* (non-comrades). Non-comrades were, among other restrictions, kept out of research planning, because research plans were discussed at Party meetings. In other words, the failure to join

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the Party had more than symbolic repercussions.

Other ordeals and tests of loyalty became visible only with an intellectual's advancement. Signatures promising to maintain secrecy and to transmit relevant information to the State security were rewarded with privileges such as the right to attend international conferences, which in turn led to new requests to share information about those trips, and so on. Only intellectuals who had climbed the ladder could gain increasing insights into the functioning of the system. But the price they paid was an ever-closer and increasingly compromised involvement with the system itself. In other words, it was not the often proclaimed socialist persuasions or the faith in the Communist utopia that prevented the vast majority of Communist intellectuals from participating in the dismantling and reformation of the academic apparatus, but the degree of their own shameful involvement.

Younger intellectuals did not know or understand the hidden academic structures well enough to attack them successfully. The establishment, on the other hand, succeeded in uniting most of them in its fear of Western intruders. One action exemplifying this new unity was the so-called clearance of everybody's files of unnecessary materials, in early 1990, as a seemingly democratic measure to erase records of Party membership, administrative functions, and so on. This was strategically clever: instead of analyzing the personal involvement and assigning the necessary consequences at the end of the *Wende,* there was a unified post-Communist intelligentsia with a completely hidden past, and, likewise, a group that completely denied personal responsibility for anything that happened before 1989.

There also were niches for intellectuals within the churches and, to a much smaller degree, in the media. These were socially marginalized, but the intensity of their explorations and the exchange of ideas among them was much stronger than within the official intelligentsia. They feared the 1989 changes as much as the unofficial segment of the intelligentsia welcomed them, albeit in a somewhat artless fashion, taking them as the fulfilment of their cherished dreams. At the same time, the unofficial intelligentsia's insights and professional experience were insufficient, so that they were unable to provide the anti-Communist movement with the conceptual vigor it needed.

When the two systems merged between 1990 and 1993, misunderstandings inevitably ensued. Scholars from the underprivileged strata expected the miraculous arrival of judges from the West who would separate the worthy from the unworthy. The former Communist establishment, of course, was afraid. But there was a reluctance to investigate,

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analyze, and judge, due to West Germany's lack of centralized structures, of personnel and experience for the task, and to its daunting and unprecedented nature. The only exception was the Academy of Sciences. Otherwise, the reform was entrusted to those who were to be reformed, with the result that the transformations in East German academe were more tedious than in any other area of society. When official measures were finally taken by the ministries of education of the *Länder,* they could not but be confrontational, sternly bureaucratic, and often brutal.

The misery of East German intellectuals became visible after some outsiders published letters in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Der Spiegel,* and other periodicals. The complaints usually went along the same lines as a much-discussed letter written by five professors of mathematics at Leipzig University in May of 1990. Less prominent was a letter written by a physicist and myself to Hans-Joachim Meyer, at the time the Minister of Education of the GDR, in June 1990. We asked that Leipzig University rid itself of the name of Karl Marx, who had never even visited this institution; that all official and unofficial state security informers should be revealed and fired; and that professorships with ideological underpinnings be terminated and then restaffed.

The only newspaper which decided to publish my letter removed a paragraph about state security people. But the publication of the letter made my situation in the department unbearable, and I finally decided to leave for good. I was accused at a faculty meeting of "aspiring to the role of an inquisitor," of "betrayal of my profession," and – with a paradoxical reversal of roles – of "informing on my colleagues to the media." This was typical. A less temporal problem regarding post-Communist, East German intellectuals is their intellectual competence. Arnulf Baring, in *Germany, What Now?,* doubted the scholarly competence of most East German intellectuals, whom he found "to a large extent unusable." Baring called the former GDR a "headless country." Indeed, the lack of a professionally, morally, and politically independent intelligentsia made the system work politically and decay economically. Paradoxically, this was one of the conditions which led to the eventual collapse of the system: During the economic and political crises of the 1980s, when intellectual flexibility was needed, intellectuals could not meet the demands to save the system that had borne them. Even considering the impressive mimicry acted out by the Communist-ruled academe which mocked real intellectual life, most achievements were reached not because of but despite the Party-governed system.

Immediately after 1989, established scholars showed little hesitancy to use their old connections with Western colleagues which they alone had

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been able to establish before 1989. Many of them intimidated their younger, dependent colleagues, maintaining that only under their leadership would they be able to continue their careers. Incoming information about grants, positions, and conferences was passed on only to colleagues who proved submissive. Some Western intellectuals who felt uneasy about their supposed intrusion tried to help those who presented themselves as East Germany's intellectuals who had suffered under the regime.

West German academics complained about high unemployment, overabundance of students, decreasing quality of teaching, and lack of intellectual achievement in a bureaucratized state. Both sides were dissatisfied. The eventual merger of the two German academies was ameliorated by a number of factors: the multifarious connections between political structures and university administrations; the achievement of the privileged, lifelong, unchallenged status of professor as the ultimate goal for intellectuals; the complete absence of student feedback regarding the quality of teaching; and the existence of old-boy networks in the nomination and appointment of new professors and in long-term career planning. Some demagogues even used these similarities in order to claim that both systems were equally unjust. What was less obvious and thus often forgotten by both sides was the fact that the East German intelligentsia entered the merger with its counterpart as a highly centralized, and almost homogeneous force, whereas West German academe has been more decentralized and quite diverse.

As the American historian S. Frederick Starr recently pointed out regarding the Soviet intelligentsia, the notion that they are victims of the totalitarian system is wrong. In many respects, the official intelligentsia was always quick to get rid of its dissenting members. With little hesitation, the Communist intellectual establishment took advantage of its position: its members received relatively high salaries; they could work in interesting fields; they could travel to the West as official representatives. Only in the 1980s when the socialist economies began to deteriorate badly, when the living standard was determined by the underground market of direct exchange rather than by the amount of money they had, only then did these privileges count for less. At this very moment some sort of identity crisis made many intellectuals think of alternatives, usually formulated in Gorbachovean terms. By the middle of the 1980s, a few disquieting questions began to be raised in Party schools, trade union meetings, and in personal discussions. This does not mean, however, that a serious process of social reforms was anticipated or demanded. Most critical intellectuals were hoping for moderate reforms, not for a radical abolition of the Communist system. Thus, as

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soon as the *Wende* evoked the question of the moral and intellectual legitimacy of the East German (and East European) intelligentsia, a new alliance was born. Former dissidents or semi-dissidents were united with the former establishment in their protest against West Germans. Both official and unofficial elements of the post-Communist intelligentsia discovered, much to their surprise and chagrin, that the new criteria for professional selection were neither political nor moral, nor the guaranteed right of life-long employment at one's alma mater, but merely the market situation in a given field, individual expertise, and some less rationally explicable factors. This discovery still haunts them.

In 1988, the Bielefeld sociologist Niklas Luhmann stated that Eastern European intellectuals, due to their long-term isolation, suffer from severe methodological shortcomings in their respective fields, and show little ability to conceptually work on their own. But, Luhmann continued, once they could use their practically acquired knowledge of the Communist system, they could offer new insights that no Western intellectual could. Unfortunately, this prediction has not come true. This is at least partly due to the clumsiness of the debate. The often contradictory nature of the transformational processes was not differentiated enough. So far, the discussion of Germany's reunification and future, including that of its post-Communist intellectuals, has mainly helped in the reproduction of stereotypes. A new sobriety, a departure from previously cherished naive notions, seems necessary, both for post-Communist German intellectuals and for everyone involved in the discussion on Germany in general.

Wilfried von Bredow: The new world order of 1945 as reflected in the Charter of the United Nations did not materialize. Instead, the East-West conflict became the Cold War. For the Germans, this development meant a threat and an opportunity. A threat, because the division of Berlin, of Germany, of Europe, and, to a certain degree, of the world submerged the chances for reunification. An opportunity (although in a rather asymmetrical balance between the FRG and the GDR), because the Cold War converted yesterday's loser of the war into today's ally in the Cold War. For West Germany, this was the beginning of a success story. For East Germany, it was much less glamorous, but it provided some sort of reward. No one really likes to remember this, but people from the GDR often prided themselves that they were more or less the only people who could make socialism work. They failed to do so, but their political leaders were comparatively successful in projecting such an image to their own society and even to outside observers.

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The unification of the two German states in 1990 was possible due to the end of the East-West conflict, but it came as a surprise to the Germans themselves.

I will restrict myself to Germany's foreign policy in its relationship with the United States – a very special one for the FRG since its beginnings. What is the future of this special relationship? Which developments will affect it? Is there a growing political distance between the U.S. and Germany? Or will there be, after a period of readjustment, a kind of American-German co-leadership of the Western world? Because of the character of the 1990s as a decade of rapid change and turbulence in the international system, there is no way to produce more than a preliminary perspective on these questions. However, there is enough evidence pointing to the emergence of a new structural framework in the international system.

For the Germans, the decades of the East-West conflict appear now as a rather idyllic era. The possibility of a nuclear war in Europe was perceived (the years between 1979 and 1984 being a sort of exception) as a permanent threat but not a likelihood. West Germany was fully integrated into the Western alliance. It was generally felt that there was no viable alternative, and, indeed, there was hardly any group or political party opposing it, some anti-Americanism on the political left notwithstanding.

The end of the East-West conflict changed this constellation. As a result, for the first time Germany must make strategic choices. Although the concept of national sovereignty is somewhat blurred, it makes sense to argue that a unified Germany, which has won "full sovereignty" by the Two-Plus-Four Treaty (the ultimate substitute for a peace treaty which will never come), had become accustomed to international supervision and thus has difficulties in adapting itself to maneuver freely.

The international system has been undergoing dramatic changes. The most relevant of these changes are the trend towards globalization, as more and more aspects of people's lives are drawn into networks irrespective of their geographical location; the trend toward fragmentation of traditional political units; the increase in the number of participants in the international system; the increase in categories of inter- and transnational actors; the diversification of power and of the methods to make use of it.

Even the U.S., which in the wake of the break-down of Soviet Communism was perceived as the only surviving superpower, had to learn that its status did not really help to introduce a "new world order." It is difficult to define the profile of any new world order, because political developments after the end of the East-West conflict displayed a

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disquieting ambivalence (in fact, multivalence). A secular and humanist universalism (including some double standards) must confront numerous political theologies. Concepts of modernization collide with postmodern concepts of re-naturalization. Arms control perspectives are challenged by new forms of militarism. All this underlines the necessity to reflect upon the means by which order is traditionally established and protected – through power.

As the American political scientist Joseph S. Nye put it, the structure of power resembles a three-dimensional chess game: "The top, military board is unipolar, with the United States being the only country capable of projecting global military force. The middle, economic board is tripolar. The United States, the European Union and Japan account for two-thirds of the world economy. China's dramatic economic growth may make this board quadripolar by the turn of the century. The bottom board consists of diverse transnational relationships outside the control of governments, including economic flow, drug trafficking, terrorism, and depletion of the ozone layer. On this board, there are no poles."

In other words, the distribution of power in inter- and transnational politics does not allow for a clear-cut hierarchy, for military power may be useless in dealing with the economic power of states and may just be the wrong force to influence political developments. Nye points to the European Union and not to Germany when referring to the great economic power of this macro-region. There is, indeed, a certain ambiguity as to the concentration of economic power. For it is distributed among non-states, states, and in the case of Western Europe, the Union.

The German foreign and security policy establishment and, *cum grano salis,* public opinion (as far as it deals with politics) are not happy with the implications of recent developments. That which has been labeled with the euphemism "international responsibility" is regarded as a Greek gift. This is mostly a consequence of two positive experiences: After the defeat of National Socialism, the new German polity was conceived in such a way that National Socialism and other such movements would never again win over the minds of Germans. This included, among other things, a strong rejection of nationalism and unilateralism in matters of foreign policy. German foreign policy emphasizes concepts like multilateralism and integration. Article 24 of the Basic Law allows the Federation to transfer sovereign powers to inter-governmental institutions. This perspective became evident during the decades of the East-West conflict. It is part of West Germany's political culture. Multilateral legitimation for Germany's foreign and security policy seems to be a prerequisite for

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success. Any attempt by Germany to separate its foreign policy from its allies so far has failed.

The discussion in Germany about foreign policy (FSP) is divided into two camps. On one side are advocates of a low-profile FSP, trying to depict Germany as a middle-power which should be on guard against the seductive forces of power politics. They are in the majority. On the other side, political scientists and historians (like Christian Hacke, Hans-Peter Schwarz, Arnulf Baring, or Michael Stürmer) try to convince the public and the politicians that Germany is indeed a world power and therefore must be prepared to take the lead. Both camps, however, agree on the principle of multilateralism and refuse to embrace German unilateralism.

During the years of the East-West conflict, the common perception of the Soviet or Communist threat created a strong political bond between Western Europe and North America. However, even then, West Germany's integration, from 1949 on, was characterized by a difficult and sometimes delicate balance of the two horizons. In the early 1960s, a deep rift between a Gaullist and an Atlanticist faction of the government overshadowed Konrad Adenauer's chancellorship. Serious differences in security matters and in the perceptions of the U.S.S.R. emerged again during the first half of the 1980s, between the U.S. and West Germany. On the other hand, the German and French conceptions and priorities for the process of West European integration were hardly ever in full agreement. In fact, the highly praised Franco-German reconciliation is based on a myth, and it has worked so well only because they have not yet encountered major problems.

There is a kind of general rule to Germany's foreign security policy: not to get into a situation where a choice between France (and the European Community, now the European Union) and the United States is necessary. The EC creates the necessary platform from which Germany can reach out without being severely handicapped by the shadows of its National Socialist past. The U.S. is such an important ally for Germany, because it holds the Europe-U.S.-Japan triangle together and manages most of the nuclear aspects of Western and certainly Germany's security.

There was not much enthusiasm for a quick unification among West Germans. Nor were most European countries especially fond of this prospect. Still, America played an important role. American diplomacy was decisive at four pivotal points. First, it shielded Chancellor Helmut Kohl in early December 1989, when he jumped ahead of other world leaders on the unification issue. Second, it committed France, the U.K., and the U.S.S.R. to the two-plus-four negotiating framework in February 1990. Third, it forged a common Western position on German

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membership in NATO. Fourth, it brokered a package of guarantees that led the U.S.S.R. to accept the idea of a united Germany joining NATO.

That Germany's unificiation did not develop into a crisis of Western political cohesion can be credited to the Bush administration. However, President Bush and his administration were much less fortunate in shaping what is somewhat euphemistically called the new world order. The concept behind this notion, as used by the American government at the time of the war against Saddam Hussein, appears to be a renewed version of the one-world vision of 1944-1945, albeit this time considerably more conservative. According to this concept, America was depicted as the cooperative and benign number-one world power, supported by a handful of number two's, among them Germany. This not very realist picture was called co-leadership, a term with a slightly paternalistic flavor.

Political scientists gave this notion their own distinctive intellectual twists. In the summer of 1990, John Mearsheimer had already started a debate in the journal *International Security* by predicting a rather bleak future for the security of the European continent, focusing mostly on ethnic and economic conflicts that might grow and develop into military conflicts. For Mearsheimer, a regional hegemony would be needed and this could only be Germany. In 1993, a similar, though less dramatic, picture of Europe's future was drawn by Kenneth Waltz, who argued, "The achievement of unity would produce an instant great power, complete with second-strike nuclear forces. But politically the European case is complicated. Many believe that the EC has moved so far toward unity that it cannot pull back. . . . Especially in Britain and France, many believe that their states will never finally surrender their sovereignty. Germany may ultimately find that reunification and the renewed life of a great power are more invigorating than the struggles, complications, and compromises that come during, and would come after, the uniting of Western Europe. If the EC fails to become a single political entity, the emerging world will nevertheless be one of four or five great powers, whether the European one is called Germany or the United States of Europe."

The German political establishment officially, and with a certain credibility, refuses such an alternative. The European option is based on a broad political consensus. Furthermore, Germany would have to surmount many hurdles in order to become an effective leading European power. For example, there is the ill-timed attempt of Foreign Minister Kinkel to win a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. In fact, it would be in Germany's interest to create European political

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structures which allow for its own development without assuming a hegemonic role. But it is getting more and more difficult for Germany to succeed in the former and avoid the latter, or avoid being perceived as striving for regional hegemony, even if does not intend to do so.

Germany does not appear very powerful, in spite of its well-trained armed forces with 3,700 soldiers. It does not have nuclear weapons and, during the unification process, agreed not to develop or possess such weapons. According to Kenneth Waltz, "Because nuclear weapons widen the range of economic capabilities within which great powers and would-be great powers can effectively compete, the door to the great-power club will swing open if the European Community, Germany, China, or Japan knock on it. Whether or not they do so is partly a matter of decision – the decision of Japan and Germany to equip themselves as great powers." The premise that nuclear weapons widen the range of economic capabilities is somewhat surprising, but the question is whether Germany will, as a consequence of its increased influence in Europe, dissolve the legal and political ties which impede its rise as a nuclear power.

In comparison with the rather exaggerated fears in the United States of Japan as an economic competitor and of Japanese technological superiority, the rise of Germany-in-Europe (or Germany-and-Europe) into the big leagues elicited few American reservations. Germany's self-perception as a team-player in international politics has become part of its political culture. The unification process and its consequences have not weakened this internalized multilateral obligation.

Mitchell Ash: In the post–Cold War era, massive numbers of people have been migrating. Germans themselves are the product of mass migration, of the so–called *Völkerwanderung* during the declining years of the Roman Empire, and of the subsequent blending of the Germanic tribes with Slavs in Central and Eastern Europe. One of the most powerful bonds in the relationship of Germany and the United States has been the emigration of over seven million Germans.

But in one episode, the relationship of Germany and America was shaped not by migrants in the broader sense, but by refugees – the so-called "intellectual migration" from Nazi Germany after 1933. More than two thousand scholars and scientists and about as many artists, writers, and musicians were forced to leave Germany by the Nazi civil service law, by the Nuremberg Laws, and by political persecution. They were only a tiny fraction of the more than five hundred thousand Jewish émigrés from German-speaking Europe in this period, but these émigrés

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have given us some of the most profound and complex accounts of the cultural breaks and reconstructions characteristic of modern life. Many of them reflected on the roots of Nazism, authoritarianism and anti-Semitism. Some extended these reflections to postwar Germany. Now, post-unification Germany raises fundamental questions about the continuity of the émigrés' legacy. Unification, and with it a growing re-nationalization of German culture, have come just as the last of these émigrés are leaving us.

The most specific distinguishing feature of the forced migration of German Jews under Nazism is the deep insult so many of them felt to their own identities when they were singled out as foreigners in their own country. After 1933, the émigrés rarely left on the basis of criteria that were comprehensible to them, but were required to do so after being deprived of their livelihoods, their citizenship, and ultimately their right to live, on grounds utterly foreign to their views of themselves. Even when they maintained Jewish lives and identities at home or in public, which many did not, these Jews took their membership in German or Austrian culture seriously.

Despite the common experience of unexpected expulsion, the émigrés were by no means a unified group. The numerous organizations created to aid them only accentuated existing personal and intellectual differences. The result was a wide variety of émigré experiences, from the self-enclosed milieu surrounding the Institute for Social Research, whose leading members Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno published for a time in German, to the somewhat smoother though rarely easy integration of other scientists and scholars into existing laboratories and universities, to the struggles of academic and professional women – many of whom became secretaries or housekeepers in order to keep their families going in the Depression.

Even if they eventually found niches in American academic, professional or cultural life, the émigrés learned quickly that they had not escaped anti-Semitism. American consular and immigration officials were notoriously reluctant to grant visas to Jewish refugees. The activities of the German-American *Bund* and the popularity of demagogues like Father James Coughlin were prominent features in the America of the 1930s. Both the experience of exclusion from German culture and of anti-Semitism in America led some émigrés to convert biography into theory, as Edith Kurzweil has put it – to respond to their situation as exiles by reflecting more deeply on the impact of that experience.

The intellectual émigrés from Nazism faced profound challenges to their thinking as well as to their identities and professional standing. As

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the politically engaged Hans Speier put it, in the title of his autobiographical essay, "Not Exile, but Hitler's Victory Was the Challenge." Even for those who had not been politically active before 1933, reflecting on their biographies often led to remarkable changes in their thinking and research. Before their migration, most of these émigrés were not concerned with Jewish thought or the psychological or social problems of Jews: they were highly acculturated. After their emigration they often faced the problems of anti–Semitism, authoritarianism or Jewish identity for the first time. Kurt Lewin, the founder of group dynamics, and Else Frenkel-Brunswick, one of the authors of *The Authoritarian Personality,* are exemplary.

In 1933, Kurt Lewin resigned from his position at the Psychological Institute of the University of Berlin and emigrated to America. He remarked in a letter to the institute's director Wolfgang Kohler: "The actual loss of civil rights of the Jews is increasing daily and will no doubt be carried out completely in the peculiarly systematic German way, whether slowly and methodically, or in periodic waves. . . . I cannot imagine how a Jew is supposed to live a life in Germany at the present time that does justice to even the most primitive demands of truthfulness."

After his emigration, in a 1935 essay, "Socio-Psychological Problems of a Minority Group," Lewin described the situation of a minority as depending on the relative permeability of the boundary between in- and out-groups. For ghetto Jews before nominal emancipation, he suggested, rigid social boundaries were confining, but strong "we-feelings" provided compensation. For the emancipated and assimilating Jews of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe, he said, it was difficult to develop a feeling of belonging to either group. His thoughts on the subject eventually helped American social scientists to develop the concept of "marginal" man.

In 1936, Lewin discussed national cultural differences in education. While working at an educational research station in Iowa, he had encountered an apparent paradox – the fact that even the supposedly democratic educational system of the United States has hierarchical structures, rigidly prescribed lesson plans, and mechanically applied teaching techniques. In a heterogeneous, pluralistic "social space" highly diversified by ethnic, racial and class differencess, Lewin argued, such structures prepared children for independent action by giving them firm behavioral guidelines and values, whereas rigidity and obedience were required in Germany's more homogeneous social system. From these ideas came studies of so-called "authoritarian," "democratic" and "laissez-

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faire" children's play groups.

Subsequently, Lewin developed a program he called "action research," funded in part by the American Jewish Committee and intended, among other things, to find ways of confronting and eradicating racism and anti-Semitism. The optimism behind such efforts was not shared by Lewin's émigré rivals from the Frankfurt school, who criticized his alleged lack of appreciation for the social roots and emotional depth of racism and anti-Semitism.

After being interrogated by the Gestapo following the Nazi invasion of Austria in 1938, Else Frenkel left the Vienna Psychological Institute for Berkeley. The day she arrived in New York she married her former colleague Egon Brunswik, who had preceded her in 1936 Despite difficulties due to the University of California's so-called nepotism rule, she became involved in R. Nevitt Sanford's studies on racial and ethnic prejudice in children. This eventually resulted in her extensive contributions to *The Authoritarian Personaliity* (1950). In in-depth clinical interviews of children and adults, she tried to discover both the "latent" and the "manifest" dimensions of the personality dynamics underlying both so-called "authoritarian" and "liberal" types.

A central concept in her analysis was intolerance of ambiguity – an inability or unwillingness to accept contradictions or complexities either in one's own world view or in one's views of other people. Her explanation of responses was multi–dimensional, but its central features came from psychoanalytic psychology, which she had learned through a training analysis in Vienna. She argued, in essence, that a rigid authoritarian rather than a nurturing upbringing resulted in ambiguous feelings in children about their parents and their sex role. Guilt about such feelings and an underlying identification with and envy of the other sex, or of the out–group with its imagined pleasures, could easily be displaced onto political leaders, minority groups, or foreign countries. This led to what she called "a personalization of the entire social outlook," and to a rigid attachment to particular ethnic, social and sexual identities: "It is as if everything would go to pieces if the existing discrepancies were faced."

Such work both derived from and helped to sustain a widespread tendency in 1940s and 1950s America to diagnose social problems with categories from individual psychology. However, Frenkel-Brunswik and her co-workers also emphasized the underlying social, economic and political roots of such problems. She noted, for example, that intolerance of ambiguity in children came mainly from lower-middle-class families preoccupied with maintaining their status and social distance from ethnic and racial minorities as well as from the unskilled workers living nearby.

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She said that even within such groups "authoritarian" personality traits are subject to wide variations – which might or might not be activated in particular political or social crises. The idea of intolerance of ambiguity is still used for understanding the psychological roots of social unrest and, more broadly, for describing a fundamental deficit in contemporary political culture in America as well as Germany.

These two examples show that forced migration engendered analyses of social issues with implications beyond their roots in reflections on Nazism. By integrating European and American intellectual traditions and research methods, the émigrés helped make American science and culture more cosmopolitan. Such an approach still represents the best way of finding common ground in a multicultural world.

As returnees to or commentators on Germany, some émigrés acted as living, though deeply ambivalent, bonds between their former homeland and other cultures. A number of them, including Kurt Lewin, worked feverishly on Allied plans to "reeducate" the Germans after Nazism's defeat. Others were deeply skeptical of such efforts. As early as 1943, Thomas Mann refused social democratic politician Ernst Reuter's request to formulate an appeal to the German people with these pointed remarks: "I believe we have little to teach the Germans and nothing to warn them about. . . . The people of Europe, including Germany have, after all, passed through a purgatorial experience through which most of the émigrés . . . have *not* gone." This fundamental discrepancy in personal experience shaped émigrés and Germans' feelings about one another for decades to come.

The bitter reality Hannah Arendt encountered on her first visit, in 1950, confirmed Mann's prescient comments. She wrote of the "absence of mourning for the dead," and of "the apathy with which they react, or rather fail to react, to the fate of the refugees in their midst." For her these were signs of Germans' "deep-rooted, stubborn and at times vicious refusal to face and come to terms with what really happened." The self–pity or self–absorption at work came out most clearly when she revealed to her interlocutors that she was a Jew. "This is usually followed by a little embarrassed pause; and then comes – not a personal question, such as 'where did you go after you left Germany?', no sign of sympathy, such as 'What happened to your family?' – but a deluge of stories about how Germans have suffered (true enough, of course, but beside the point); and if the object of this little experiment happens to be educated and intelligent, he will proceed to draw up a balance between German suffering and the suffering of others." The emotional gulf between Jews and Germans had become greater than ever before, marked all the more

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deeply by Germans' exclusive concentration on their own woes.

There were, however, two sides to this story. When Arendt described the murder of the Jews and the sufferings of Jewish exiles as "what really happened," she created a hierarchy in which these facts represented, indeed embodied, Nazi Germany's fundamental break with human civilization. Justified as this was, Arendt did not recognize that the experiences of Nazism's intended victims could hardly have been as personally immediate for Germans as the bombings of Hamburg and Dresden, the rape of tens of thousands of women by Soviet soldiers or the forced repatriation of millions of Germans after 1945. This gulf is central to grasping the difficulties still in the way of mutual understanding between Germans and other peoples. What Germans ought to remember – in the opinions of others – has differed from what Germans actually remember.

Despite this basic discrepancy, many émigrés tried to bring the fruits of their reflections back to what they hoped would be a Germany they could change for the better. The tragic fates of some of the émigrés who returned to the Soviet occupation zone and later to the German Democratic Republic have been described by Jeffrey Herf.

It is hardly surprising that émigré observations of the Bonn Republic were deeply skeptical. Franz Neumann, for example, saw in the Federal Republic's Basic Law, the most liberal constitution Germany had ever had, a sign of "constitutional fetishism" at work. He perceptively diagnosed the problematic belief that the forms of the legal state alone guarantee democratic government. Only rarely do Germans acknowledge that there might be a tension between the formal administration of justice and personal loyalty to democratically legitimated institutions. That tension has come to the fore since unification, expressed pithily in Barbel Bohley's comment on the varied efforts to put the former East German leadership on trial: "We wanted justice," she said, "but got the rule of the law."

Neumann was especially skeptical of the social basis of German democracy. He did not see how the traditionally anti-democratic and illiberal middle classes would suddenly become committed democrats, or how a defensive and state–oriented union movement would compensate for the lack of commitment to democracy among the elites. He thus saw the only guarantee of a democratic future in the continued presence of the Americans. Later on, he modified his skepticism, noting that the strong position of the Federal Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, had become an important stabilizing factor. But he continued to believe, rightly, that the price of stability – the increasing power of the bureaucracy in the West German "social state" – had been high.

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Since the 1960s, a new, rebellious generation criticized both their elders' silence about the Nazi past and many of the difficulties of democratization the émigrés had diagnosed in the 1950s. In doing so, they invoked the émigrés' own voices at every turn. Thus they praised many Germans, especially in the Federal Republic, for their efforts to open up German culture to the Western world. Examples range from citations of Herbert Marcuse by the new left and of émigré psychoanalyst Siegried Bernfeld by anti–authoritarian education reformers, to the later reception of Norbert Elias's theories of civilization and Hans Jonas's meditation on "theodicy after Auschwitz" by philosophers and theologicans, and Jonas's "ethics of responsibility" by the environmental movement. However, the equally fervent citation of political theorist Leo Strauss by conservative thinkers shows that émigrés were represented on both sides of the political spectrum. Similarly ambivalent is the symbolization of émigré women, such as Hannah Arendt or Anna Freud, as figures of identification for feminists – though they would not have accepted the more extreme claims advanced by today's feminists. These voices are growing quieter now, just as unification fundamentally alters Germany's political culture and its role in world affairs. How enduring will the émigrés' legacy be?

The many symbolic roles they have played in West German culture up to the 1980s have continued apace since unification, and links have been forged with less prominent émigrés. Official invitations from dozens of German cities have enabled hundreds of survivors to return for brief visits. In Berlin and other cities local history exhibitions reconstruct the former locations of synagogues and present interviews with individual émigrés. But such efforts are fraught with ambivalence. The sincerity of most of those involved is not in question; but it is relatively easy to show good will to a dwindling number of Jews who do not actually live in Germany, or to celebrate the memories of great and safely dead Jews.

Subtle signs point to the limits of such gestures. A major research program generously funded by the German Research Council in the 1980s to produce comprehensive documentation of the lives and careers of émigré scientists and humanists was ended in 1992. The émigrés had suddenly become less interesting, and some have claimed that their story was not so unique after all, but "only" one episode in the long history of the circulation of intellectual elites. A number of East German writers and academics who have been dismissed or whose reputations have been under attack since unification, such as Christa Wolf, have taken a peculiar comfort in identifying with these exiles of the past, thus blurring in their own way essential differences between their experiences and those

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of persecuted Jews.

But the complex implications of the émigrés' legacy for the new Germany go further. The émigrés' experience was part of the basis for the generous asylum provisions of Article 4 of the Federal Republic's Basic Law. This once read, simply and eloquently, that the right to political asylum shall not be abridged. Along with Article 1, which asserts that "the dignity of the human being shall not be infringed," and makes the defense of human rights the primary duty of the state, it marks a fundamental break with the Nazi past. But Article 4 spoke only of political refugees, and was never intended to sanction open borders.

The cosmopolitanism the Nazi-era émigrés embodied in their experiences and represented in their thought, and that had been so eloquently proclaimed, at least in West Germany, and in the form of socialist internationalism in East Germany, as a way for Germans to distance themselves from the Nazi past, rests on uneasy foundations. Germans clearly remain unwilling to adjust their conception of citizenship and national identity, which still emphasizes blood ties and culture, to fit the multinational and multicultural facts of their social existence. The uncertainties of post-industrial life, combined with those of unification, have produced tensions and insecurities that easily induce xenophobia.

In the elite as well, a new spirit is awakening. As the postwar era ends, long-suppressed particularisms return. Sociologist Wolf Lepenies noted as early as 1991 that for some intellectuals the legacy of the émigrés has become less interesting than a renewed search for German identity: "A new *Korpsgeist* is in demand," he writes, "and old inhibitions can be given up." That trend began before unification, in the Historikerstreit and, more seriously, in other efforts by members of the political establishment to step out of the shadow of Nazism and to rehabilitate a specifically German past. This is the background to current criticism from the right of Germany's alleged over–dependence on its links with the West, as well as recent efforts to bring out the "modernizing" aspects of Nazism. Attempts by some conservatives to invoke liberal–sounding cultural pluralism as a way of opposing multiculturalism are part of the mix. For these writers, cultural pluralism is good, so long as the peoples of each culture remain in their original homelands.

Such intellectual moves are hardly limited to Germany. But in that country today, the problem of even acknowledging the existence of a multicultural society, more broadly the difficulties of learning to tolerate, accept, and work through ambiguities and contradictions of any sort, have hardly been faced, let alone solved. The deep tension between an apparently liberal allegiance to a culture of tolerance and open debate

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and the continuing wish for inwardness and harmonious community is still in evidence. At such a time, it is more important than ever to acknowledge and remember the émigrés' heritage.

David Gress: Thank you. Will our audience members please state their names and formulate their comments as questions to one or more of the panelists? Thank you.

Karl Hyman: To Professor Ash. I'm afraid you did not watch PBS a few weeks ago, which broadcast a show, part of the Holocaust series, "Deceit and Indifference." It demonstrates that the American State Department traditionally has been anti-Semitic. I lived through the 1930s in Germany with my parents. One of my brothers left for Palestine, and the other went to Argentina. There was no problem in leaving Germany. The problem was finding a country that would accept you. My parents decided to emigrate to the United States where we had relatives, in 1936. We registered at the American Consulate in Stuttgart, but we weren't let in until 1939. My question is, has the United States State Department policy improved, or is it just as anti-Semitic?

Professor Rollberg, I agree with everything you said. I just want to quote Albert Einstein who said the world is not threatened by those who do evil; it is threatened by those who let it happen.

Mitchell Ash: I am not in a position to tell you whether the State Department now is anti-Semitic. However, a number of Jews have risen to rather high positions in the State Department in recent years. Whether that has any impact on policy or not is an entirely different question.

Harry Fisk: I am from the University of Hartford. I, too, am an emigrant. I, too, came here at the very last minute. Yes, the Final Solution was the responsibility of the whole world. We had great difficulty getting any country to open its doors to us. Professor Rollberg described an incident where three Poles managed to assuage the anger of three hundred thousand people. I'm a clinical psychologist, and I deal with problems of individuals. However, I think you're being too optimistic in finding the solution for social problems in individuals. We need a social psychology that will explain mass reactions. Stanley Milgram, in his study, found an excessive amount of obedience to authority, even in the United States, when college students were told to administer electric shock to others, and followed orders. I feel that we need broader conceptions to understand why eighty million Germans shared one man's

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psychotic delusion about the Jews. It's something I find utterly incomprehensible. We don't have the conceptual tools. As to Dr. Ash's intolerance for ambiguity: I would like to recommend a book that was recently published by the psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas, *Being a Character*. He talks about the fascist state of mind, which oversimplifies things.

Mitchell Ash: Yes, but this does not refute what I said. If you remember the proceedings of the experiments you cited, those students were persuaded to torture other people because they were told it was necessary. But there was a follow-up experiment, I think in the early 1970s, where a person who knew about the conditions and enlightened the other participants and asked whether they thought what they were doing was right, and suggested they should think about it. The response was surprising. About sixty percent of the participants were hesitant to continue that experiment.

David Gress: Any questions for Wilfried Bredow? All of the discussion so far has been on psychology. Perhaps we could combine that with a question about politics.

Gaspar Tamas: I just want to make a comment on your quotation from Franz Neumann, which, I think, is important in shaping the future of democracy everywhere. This is the relationship between the *Reichsstaat* and democracy and what is called constitutional fetishism. First of all, I always get slightly uneasy when I say *Reichsstaat* in English. The word actually comes from the German translation of Edmund Burke, which rendered the words "rule of law" as *Reichsstaat*. It means only that in Germany and in new democracies there again was a firm attitude that tried to anchor basic rights and liberties, and and to prescribe in detail what these should be. Well, this is caused by fear. We lived in countries where there were no guarantees under the law. So I think we should have some understanding of legal and constitutional fetishism and the tendency by the framers of constitutions in new democracies to anchor every little detail in the constitutional text, because we don't trust the texture, the fabric of society, our habits, our traditions, our mental makeup.

David Gress: Does anyone want to respond?

Jeffrey Herf: About German unification. Mikail Gorbachev gets the lion's share of credit in a great deal of commentary, but I was pleased to

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see Professor von Bredow mention the role of George Bush and James Baker. I think historians will look back on this episode as one of the most impressive chapters in American diplomacy in many, many decades, because they managed to bring about the peaceful reunification of Germany – at the same time that the Soviet Union had lost the Cold War, suffered a humiliating defeat – and did so while assuaging Russian fears about a reunified Germany. That was done by keeping Germany within the Western alliance, and by seeing to it that a unified Germany would not be a neutral Germany.

The second issue that I would like to raise concerns the question about Germany's role in international affairs. I would call it the damned-if-they-don't or damned-if-they-do issue. This regards John Mershiemer's arguments about conflict and war in Eastern Europe and the role of Germany. It also gets back to issues that were raised by the first panel yesterday, about guilt. The lessons of the German past and reflections on it are not clear. They don't point to any one particular response. The response to the war in the Balkans is a good example. For those of us who think that we have witnessed a genocide, an aggression in the Balkans, one can argue that because of the Nazi past Germany had a special responsibility to do something and, with the United States, to put an end to this. But when Germans made that argument, they were denounced as aggressors who wanted to bring about the Fourth Reich, who wanted to revive German influence in Europe. They revived these nightmares in Paris and London. I have no easy and clear solution to this dilemma. I'd be interested to know what Professor von Bredow thinks about it. Because I imagine that in the coming decades peace and light is not going to shine on Eastern Europe and that there will be more problems. The question of how the German past relates to German responsibilities in the present and the future is going to come up again and again. The answers that have been given for the last three decades, namely that the Germans should always be inward-looking, pacifist, multilateral, and not do anything to offend anybody are not the kind of answers that are necessarily going to be conducive to the preservation of human rights and peace.

Wilfried von Bredow: I think this is a fair description of the difficult situation of German foreign policy. One of the reasons why, for instance, the Germans were so assertive about the Balkan wars was that we just had gone through the experience of the non-intervention in the Gulf War. Everyone had pointed to the Germans and asked, "Why are you sitting back and letting other people fight this war against a dictator?" This was regarded as immoral. Now the Germans wanted to

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show their readiness to act. It went the wrong way.

This is one reason to try making a bridge to the neoconservative and nationalists in Germany. These people have such a weak resonance in the more important parts of the political and economic discourse of Germany, because they are anti-Westernn. And being anti-Western, I think, is a very deeply-rooted experience of my generation and of the generation of our sons and daughters. It is a policy which leads in the wrong direction, and without a real option. But maybe this kind of muddling-through perspective is much more adequate than great visions, which in the past always proved to be wrong visions.

Mary Sladek: Today, there is an anti-immigration mentality in the American scientific establishment. I'm wondering about the kind of welcome those who emigrated before World War II received in the scientific establishment here?

Mitchell Ash: I'm astounded to hear that you think there is an anti-immigrant mentality in the scientific establishment of the United States today, given that roughly half of the Ph.Ds in natural sciences go to foreign-born people. I don't see anybody trying to prevent their admission to Ph.D. programs. Americans are either not as qualified or not interested in getting Ph.D.s in the sciences, because the money in industry is better, so more positions inevitably go to, for example, Asians.

Mary Sladek: What you say is true. In many ways the foreign-born graduate students who come and get degrees here are seen as cheap labor. They accept lower stipends than American students. And in some disciplines, in the physical sciences particularly, I have been told that this is a problem because there aren't enough American-born applicants. Also there's a concern about a brain-drain. People come and get their Ph.D.s here and then leave, or else they stay and thereby theoretically take jobs that should go to Americans.

Mitchell Ash: Briefly, the response of the scientific community in the 1930s to the emigrés was deeply ambivalent. To put it bluntly, it's no coincidence that the concept of intellectual capital was invented in that period. The emigrés were regarded as a species of intellectual capital that one could harvest, or pull in for one's own purposes. The word "investment" appears again and again in the documents of the Rockefeller Foundation's files, when they talk about giving grants to emigrés, whether that person is or isn't a good investment is the central question. Now, that doesn't mean that humanitarian impulses played no role at

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all. There were a great many people who engaged in hours of selfless work trying to bring in emigrés, whether or not they were good investments.

David Gress: Thank you very much. It's time to draw to a close. One more brief question.

Morris Kotell: I'm a visiting composer at Adelphi this year. I have one question for Professor Ash and Professor Rollberg, and another for Professor von Bredow. My opera *Dreyfus* was done in Germany a season ago at the Opera in Bielefeld, and then this season in Vienna. I was struck by the tremendous difference in the reception. The work is about the Dreyfus Affair from the perspective of Theodor Herzl, who was a newspaper correspondent for the *Neue Presse,* and subsequently became the father of modern Zionism. The Germans were extremely enthusiastic and warm in their reception, and the reception by the Viennese was much cooler, almost an embarrassed response. In fact, the only really enthusiastic discussions about the Viennese performance were the ones that appeared in the German press from critics who missed the performance in Bielefeld and then traveled to Vienna.

Professor Rollberg, you talked about individual responses to situations in which one can act in an evil or in a courageous manner. Is there such a thing as a German national trait, a Viennese national trait? Professor von Bredow, I have not studied economics formally. But, as any musician knows, whoever pays the piper calls the tune. With Germany as the economic engine of Europe, it seems inevitable at some point that they are going to call the tune. The question is, when are they going to get over their bashfulness and exercise their power?

Peter Rollberg: Well, I don't want to get more into laymen's psychologies. But I believe that each person's behavior consists of both collectivist and individual traits, and the mixture differs from person to person, and from culture to culture. I just meant that in Russia and in Germany there is a stronger emphasis on collectivist pressures and less courage to make individual decisions, to hold individual opinions. Therefore, a solution may be to strengthen individual responses and diversity. For me, political correctness is a totalitarian tendency.

David Gress: Any comments from the panel?

Wilfred Von Bredow: I beg my Austrian friends not to shoot me, but

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I have to note that if you compare the musical public of Bielefeld and Vienna, it's of course evident that more experts are to be found in Bielefeld. I like your metaphor of playing the tune and paying the bill. I think that German interests were better served when Germans did not aspire to play a solo part but rather to be an important component of an orchestra.

David Gress: Thank you. And I now call upon the conference director, Edith Kurzweil, to give the concluding comments.

Edith Kurzweil: Thank you David. I promise to be brief. We've had a very rich and thought-provoking conference. We've had wonderful, well-informed participants and interesting debates among them. So I've been thinking this morning, about what I could possibly add. I'll begin simply by paraphrasing Freud. The voice of the intellect, he said, is low. But it keeps reaching out and eventually it emerges. I think it's emerged in the informed contributions we've heard and on a wide range of issues, here, which we covered from many perspectives. Among them, we talked about the need to mourn the atrocities committed by Germans during World War II; about mourning the death of our hopes for a socialist society; and about mourning for socialism with a human face.

We talked of the contradictory conceptions by perpetrators and by their victims; the connections between collective consciousness and individual consciousness; the way people have dealt with *Vergangenheitsbewältigung,* and much more. We heard about the legacy of the Nazi and Communist dictatorships; we asked whether these legacies can possibly be wiped out in the not-so-distant future; and about whether to approach this more in terms of a mass psychology perspective or an individual one. We speculated about economic, social, and political possibilities in the future; about the effect of migrations, and the consquences of these on the distribution of populations, and on the intellect; and about the prospect of eventually lessening the power of nationalist feelings. We have noted the emergence of a specific Austrian identity and the fact that the Austrian identity will not be swallowed by Germany, along of course with the importance of Bielefeld in the culture at large.

We heard that there are so-called opinionated feelings. Well, we've revealed a number of these here as well. I must add that contrary to what some people expressed during breaks, I don't see this as a fault at all. In fact, this is part of what a conference like this should do, because we are trying to bring together different kinds of people – people from within the university and people from outside it – and it's important for

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us all to hear from those who are on the other side of what we call a divide. We've heard also that the Austrian and German economies are more and more intertwined, and, I would add, this is not just an Austrian-German phenomenon, it's something that is worldwide in what we call the global society, but for which we have all kinds of different names. We learned that the Austrians and the French are at least ambivalent about the reunified Germany, and that the Hungarians are uninterested in what happens there.

We've been told, and I've heard many times, as you have, that Americans tend to fit events into their own theoretical frameworks and draw conclusions from them. Frederic Jameson's work of course is a prime example of ideological bias, and his Althusserian Marxism was passé already long before Germany was reunified. In the political sphere, we were given a summary of what happened in the former Yugoslavia; we were told of the fact that the Germans' aggressive manner has been upsetting to its European partners, specifically when it pushed through the separation of Yugoslavia into its component nations; and that this action reinforced the prejudice that had existed for a long time. In fact, this issue is what led me to arrange this conference. Actually, I think that we have been speaking not just about the current situation, but about something that will be with us for a long time, as a number of you also said.

Overall, and very gradually, the weight of the panelists' foci moved from the psychological to the historical, to the sociological and to the economic issues, and again to the irresponsible way the American media handles information about Germans from the East or the West, about collectives as well as about individuals. For the media sort of puts everything into its own perspective, I should say a momentary perspective which is expected to go away, not only six months from now, but maybe next week, or within the next five minutes – as soon as something else happens that captures its attention.

In any event, to end up with your point, Peter Rollberg. Of course, East Germany has to redefine its collective identity while at the same time each individual is learning to express more clearly his or her personal identity in a new way. Margarete Mitscherlich said that West Germans as well have to reevaluate things they previously had been certain of, and those who emigrate, as Mitchell Ash pointed out, will have to do this too, for a long time to come. Therefore, we should remember that this is not the first time that *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is called for. Our audience has helped, I think, to enrich our discussions. I want to thank you all. And I want to thank the moderators. The edited

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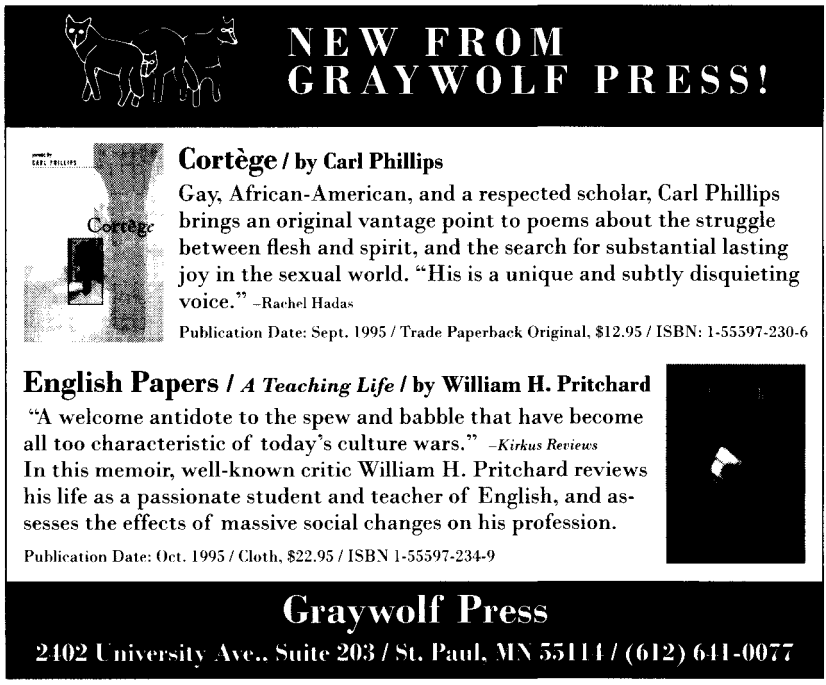
proceedings will be published in the fall in *Partisan Review*. Last but not least, I want to thank Adelphi University for having been so hospitable, and I hope to have more conferences of this calibre in the future. Thank you.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FRANK KERMODE

Life at *Encounter*

By the 1960s I was writing for papers on both sides of the ocean. For some years I'd been doing pieces for *Encounter* and knew the editors quite well. In 1965, when Stephen Spender retired from the co-editorship and went to America, Melvin Lasky, the other editor, asked me to take his place.

This was an unexpected and in some ways barely credible invitation, and my decision to accept was delayed and uneasy; such delay and unease is a familiar prelude to my doing things I shouldn't. It may be difficult for those who do not remember *Encounter* in the 1950s and 1960s, having perhaps seen it only during its long half-life between 1967 and its closure in 1991, to understand its influence. It was started in 1953 with the backing of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, a gentlemanly Cold War organization supported by American foundations, some of which later turned out to be merely "fronts" for the CIA. The congress so lavishly endowed conferences in pleasant places that it became a well-known gravy train, and some who later admitted or boasted that they had always known of its covert connections took full advantage of the congress's open hand.

Although there was a good deal of gossipy conjecture about it, the funding of *Encounter* and its sister journals – *Preuves* in France, *Tempo Presente* in Italy, *Cuadernos* in Spain, and *Quadrant* in Australia – was still at this time obscure. Anybody who wanted to call it in any sense disreputable had to accommodate the fact that the editors of these publications were all intellectuals in good standing, for example Nicola Chiaromonte in Italy and in Australia James McAuley.

I suppose McAuley was a typical choice for a congress-funded editorship. As a young man he had achieved a strange celebrity as part-author of the poems of Ern Malley, and could therefore be said to have been the prime mover in one of the most successful hoaxes in literary history. As it happened, I had known him in Sydney in the last year of the war and had a close-up view of the whole Ern Malley affair. The bogus poems were accepted by an avant-garde editor of whom McAuley and his associate, Harold Stewart, disapproved; the victim was comprehensively taken in, and the poems were cried up as the work of a sort of Aus-

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tralian Keats, dead in his twenties. A fictitious sister was said to have discovered the exiguous but complete works among Malley's posthumous papers and sent them to the editor with a letter asking for an opinion. He thought they were wonderful. There followed a great fuss, especially when the newspapers were told of the fraud. The story is complicated by the fact that some of the poems weren't rubbish; the editor was not altogether stupid to accept them. They reached England and were praised by Herbert Read; in the United States they charmed the youthful John Ashbery and the youthful Kenneth Koch. They were vigorously defended by the Australian painter Sydney Nolan, who for the rest of his increasingly distinguished career never wavered in his view, and to this day there are those who strongly defend Malley's reputation. Paradoxically, it has probably outlasted McAuley's own.

The hoax and its exposure were in my view rather sadistically managed, but the whole affair left one in no doubt about the toughness of McAuley's character and the extent of his talent. When writing under his own name, he was a serious poet and a potent though conservative influence on Australian intellectual life. In later years he moved steadily to the right, converted to Roman Catholicism, and became an exceptionally committed anti-Communist: hence his editorship of a journal sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

Of course all these editors were, in different degrees, anti-Communist, and some, though not necessarily all, knew from the beginning the truth about the foundations which supported their magazines. Irving Kristol and Stephen Spender, the first co-editors of *Encounter,* have consistently and plausibly denied such knowledge. In any case, the work of the congress could be represented as highly respectable, necessary to political health, and even, up to a point, disinterested. *Encounter* parties were distinguished by the presence of politicians from the left of the right and the right of the left; the magazine was anti-Communist, certainly, an exponent of Cold War politics without doubt, but allowing for the pressure this adherence necessarily placed on editorial policy, still defensible as an organ of judicious and well-informed commentary. Most readers, asked to place it politically, would have opted for the moderate left.

Melvin Lasky, who succeeded Kristol, was a man of similar formation, the product of City College of New York in the late 1930s, its political and largely Marxist heyday. While still attached to the U.S. Army in Berlin, he had edited *Der Monat,* an official publication dedicated to putting the American case in the tense, divided postwar city, and played a part in the establishment of the congress – or, as Neil Berry

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puts it, perhaps a shade too strongly, in his study of the whole affair, he was "charged with masterminding the ideological offensive against the Soviet Union." His colleague, possibly boss, at the congress, operating from Geneva, was Michael Josselson, now known to have been a CIA agent. Josselson always took a paternal if not censorious interest in the contents of *Encounter* and was often in London, as was the secretary of the congress, the elegant Nicolas Nabokov, cousin of Vladimir, composer and peripatetic agent of Cold War culture. Berry gives a formidable list of the celebrities involved; they included Malcolm Muggeridge, a representative of the congress in Britain who "took part in the money-laundering that launched *Encounter*."

The office in Panton Street was not at all grand, but there was always the feeling, encouraged by most of the operations of the congress, that there was plenty of money around for travel, lunches, and parties. My entry into the office and the peculiar congress atmosphere occurred in 1965. Lasky was always the true boss of the magazine; Spender, who did not love him, allowed that this was so, and even submitted to be called "Steefen," which was Lasky's spelling pronunciation, or perhaps a sort of quiet reproach to the poet for not spelling his name, American fashion, with a "v."

As I say, the invitation was a great surprise to me, though perhaps if I'd been wilier it need not have been. I was so far from being known as a political commentator that I could well have been thought a political innocent. I made this point, but it was dismissed as irrelevant. After all, Lasky spent his whole life looking after the politics. What he wanted was a co-editor to handle the literary component. But this was hardly a reason to choose me; numerous writers and journalists in London could have done the job at least as well as I; and then there was the disadvantage (or benefit, depending on how you looked at it) that I was living in Gloucestershire, had a job in Bristol, and most weeks couldn't spend more than a day, or at most two, in the office. No matter how hard I might try, I couldn't have much influence in the principal content of the magazine. But what I took to be a handicap was in fact my chief qualification. Somewhere in my mind or heart, mixed in with mere vanity, and that disability of which I have spoken, my reluctance to disregard the wrong road, I knew I was being set up.

Of course I persuaded myself that I had fully considered all the snags before accepting the job. This process included imperfect investigation of those rumors floating around London about the past funding of *Encounter*. They were constantly repeated but never with anything like certainty, and in any case, there was no secret about who was at present

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picking up the tab: it was Cecil King at the *Daily Mirror*. Neil Berry alleges that this slightly odd relationship was the result of a deal encouraged by Josselson, who was beginning to be anxious about all the leaks and therefore instructed his little fleet of monthlies to put what looked like clear water between themselves and the fake foundations that financed them through the congress.

My attempted inquiries were everywhere met with caution, and I found out nothing substantial enough to be weighed against undisputed professions of purity. So I joined, uneasily, but with some hope of enjoying my editorial role, minor though it was. Lasky was anxious to exaggerate my contribution, putting my name, on the grounds that "K"comes before "L," ahead of his on the masthead, but I did succeed in having this changed. Even when installed in my office I found that the whole *Encounter* operation remained somehow mysterious. I could never discover the circulation of the journal, or anything substantial about its finances, and I suspected, rightly as it turned out, that the young women who worked in the office were better informed than I. I took no part in the makeup of the issues and, as with my sojourn in the Navy, it would have made very little difference if I'd never turned up at all.

My reaction to this unsatisfying situation should have been to get out; in fact, it was to seek more control. Lasky agreed that if either of us wanted to argue strongly for an article, the other would not veto its inclusion even if he didn't like it. This pact was tested when the congress organized at a Brighton hotel a huge conference on Europe. The State Department, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and nearly all the British who were invited were strong advocates of Britain's entry into the Common Market. The speakers were great folks from all over and included the large Bavarian Franz-Josef Strauss. There was, I remember, only one eloquent dissident speaker, a journalist named Leonard Beaton from *The Manchester Guardian*.

Beaton argued that Britain's entry into Europe would be very bad for Commonwealth relations; for example, the agriculture of New Zealand had been tailored to British requirements and might be fatally distorted if the system of Commonwealth preference had to be discontinued, as it would. ("How many New Zealanders are there? Three million?" asked my co-editor, derisively echoing Stalin's remark about the Pope's divisions.) More remarkably, Beaton contested many of the dismal predictions produced by marketeers who represented entry as the only possible cure for the British economic malaise. He claimed, giving what sounded like plausible reasons, that these sages had deliberately undervalued the postwar performance of the British economy. The occasion be-

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ing what it was, his speech was not received with acclaim, indeed few took any notice of it; but it seemed to me good that somebody had produced arguments that could leaven the lump of a conference which was otherwise as dull as it was grand, because it was committed to a preordained consensus.

When the talking was over, I drove back to London with Beaton and asked him to write up his speech for *Encounter*. Surprised and amused, he asked me what made me think there was the slightest chance of such an article getting into the journal. Remembering the co-editorial pact, I said I thought there was every chance. As soon as possible I spoke to my co-editor, fazing him for once. After reflection he said that it could be done only if a counter-argument were given equal space in the same issue. This extra piece, a specific refutation of Beaton's, would of course be additional to all the other pro-Europe reports of the conference. In the end, of course, nothing was done, and I lapsed into my usual useless activity, writing this and that myself, reading dozens of hopeless unsolicited contribution and commissioning reviews, some of these by writers soon to be celebrated, such as David Lodge, and A. S. Byatt. But I can't delude myself into thinking that I revitalized the non-political part of the magazine.

This side of it didn't much interest Lasky, though he looked it over benignly. He was, as I wasn't, a journalist. Whether they belonged to the front or the back, he liked articles that could cause a bit of a stir, like the one about U and non-U language, or John Sparrow's demonstration that the prosecution in the trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* had missed the buggery episode; he took pains to ensure that such pieces got a great deal of advance publicity. *Encounter* was always in his thoughts. He scanned the press of England, Europe, and the United States for the revealing one-liners or ten-liners he gathered into the small inset boxes that enlivened the pages. He talked tirelessly to foreign journalists and politicians. In rare moments of leisure he worked at his book on revolutions. He was never anybody's simple mouthpiece, and if his politics closely resembled the politics of the State Department, that was because he believed the State Department had on the whole, and conveniently, got things right.

I'd been on *Encounter* for less than two years when the great crisis developed. It was in part a reflection of the larger turmoil of American politics, the war in Vietnam and the civil-rights movement, subjects on which *Encounter* had tended to be reticent. Conor Cruise O'Brien had already in 1963 begun questioning its disinterestedness, and in 1966 he gave a lecture in New York which explicitly accused the magazine of

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being an agent of some very sophisticated and covert American operations. The charge, quite memorably expressed, amounted to saying that as a forum of opinion it "was not quite an open forum" and that "its political acoustics were a little odd." It had not escaped O'Brien's notice that certain topics elsewhere regarded as pressing were neglected or avoided in a journal that professed to be keeping an intelligent eye on the world, at least until somebody in Washington said, probably via Geneva, that it was time to give them a judicious airing.

It might just have been possible to let O'Brien's remarks pass without notice. A report in *The New York Times* questioning the source of the fake foundation funds had been disconcerting but not particularly damaging, and despite his persistence and persuasiveness, O'Brien's remarks might have simply been ignored. But there was now an unexpected and intemperate intervention by Goronwy Rees. This strangely celebrated man, once Bursar of All Souls, Oxford, and then the Principal at the Aberystwyth branch of the University of Wales, wrote a regular *Encounter* column signed simply "R." The column, occasionally quite pungent but normally unexciting, well enough though sometimes stodgily written, was the justification for his spending several hours a day at the office. The sale of review copies, it was said, brought in just about enough to keep Goronwy in Scotch.

He had been famous in his youth, as brilliant, as a great lover, and as the original of the character of Eddy in Elizabeth Bowen's novel *The Death of the Heart*. Amazingly well-known to many important people in London, he had fairly recently become more generally notorious because of a newspaper article he wrote about his friends, the spies Burgess and MacLean. This cost him his job in Wales. Now he made a not very good living writing the official histories of department stores and the like, and doing this column for *Encounter*. He once said to me (this was about 1966), "You can live decently in London on £7,000 a year, but it's bloody well impossible to make £7,000 a year." Nevertheless, he was always in a sense looked after. I often wondered why we were so faithful to his sometimes tedious column, but Lasky clearly regarded it as sacrosanct. After his death it began to appear that Rees had probably been more closely and more professionally associated with his spy friends than he had allowed the world to think. People die off, but at this time there were many survivors of wartime secret service agencies, some well known, and it seemed that the indiscreet Goronwy had a special place in their affections.

They didn't find it necessary to talk about this and other allegiances, for of course they all knew the story already, but equally of course I had

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no real understanding of this network of ex-agents and wartime old boys. And though much less of a Candide now than I was then, I still don't quite understand Rees's response to Conor Cruise O'Brien, nor how it appeared in print. This column was a violent attack on O'Brien, which might have passed had he used it for a routine rebuttal of the charge that *Encounter* was under the control of the CIA; but he added certain allegations about the Irish writer's conduct when he was a highly placed U.N. representative in the Congo only a few years before, at the time of its decolonization.

It was arranged, or happened, that I did not see this article until it was in print, or I would surely have questioned its wisdom, accuracy, and propriety. Not surprisingly, O'Brien did. I suppose, in the ordinary way, Lasky would have dealt with this affair, but he had gone off on his long trip to South America. There now began the lengthy transatlantic telephone negotiations. Bob Silvers, Editor of *The New York Review of Books,* conveyed to me O'Brien's determination to sue for libel unless we published a retraction.

We ran up very large phone bills, but in the end I declined to do as Silvers suggested, and for two reasons. First, Rees assured me that he could produce respectable witnesses to the truth of his account, and indeed he did introduce me to two journalists who said they were willing to present themselves in that role; but I decided they were not credible. Second, I sought counsel from a barrister reputed to be the best libel lawyer in London. He gave me an exquisite little seminar on the law (I can still see him counting off the main points on his fingers), at the end of which he declared that we had a defense of qualified privilege and advised us to use it.

I don't remember the fine legal points, though I know that this defense, involving a measure of retaliation, depends on one believing that the retaliatory remarks complained of are believed to be true. My position was that I had been given explicit and quite solemn assurances that O'Brien's criticisms of *Encounter* were false, and had decided that if I was to go on working for the magazine I must behave as if I fully accepted those assurances. Everything I heard from Silvers tended to shake my faith in them, but I couldn't yet bring myself to resign, and if I didn't do that, then it seemed I had to defend the case. Here was another instance of my deplorable record in the matter of ethical choices, for when given a clearly defined alternative – choose between this and that course of conduct – I have almost always, for what seemed at the time powerful or virtuous reasons, chosen wrongly. So the writ for libel was served on me.

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My libel expert had not predicted that the case would be tried in a Dublin court, though, as the plaintiff later remarked, it seemed a natural enough consequence, since he was Irish; and since the fact that he was Irish was well known, it should surely not have been difficult for the defendants to foresee the choice of venue. There was, it appeared, no defense of qualified privilege in Irish law, so in effect, I had no defense to offer. The expert was reasonably cheerful about this development, pointing out than since *Encounter* had no property in Ireland, it didn't matter what damages the Irish court awarded, since they couldn't be collected anyway.

However, by the time the case came to trial, the whole matter had begun to look different. In March 1967 two American journals published credible articles about the activities of the CIA in financing, via the front foundations and the congress, such magazines as *Encounter.* Funds had also been used to infiltrate left-wing organizations. I was now sure that the sponsorship of Cecil King was perfectly licit; my reasons for resentment were that I had been told many lies about the past and that *Encounter* was still in rather devious ways under the control (however delicately channeled) of the CIA. For these reasons I felt I could no longer contemplate a continuing relationship with my co-editor and his associates. I had the memorably solemn word of Josselson: lunching at the Garrick, his London club, he had said in reply to my direct questions that there was no truth whatever in O'Brien's accusations, adding impressively, "I am old enough to be your father, and I would no more lie to you than I would to my son." I disliked finding out for sure that I was, as I had suspected, a dupe. And I was naïve enough, when I found it out, to be shocked by this particular lie.

I now wrote to Melvin Lasky, setting out in detail my complaints and explaining that in the absence of very persuasive explanations I couldn't go on working with him. He didn't answer the letter but came out to Gloucestershire to talk it over. As we walked, hour after hour, round the garden and paddock, he gave me the fullest account that could have been expected of his relation to the congress and of the history of *Encounter.* I was never able to dislike this man, so vivid, so New York, so convinced, so clever; and I knew that when it came to a contest which didn't matter much to me whether I won or lost, but which was, for him, only a skirmish, though quite a serious one, in a war for survival, I was not a considerable opponent. But I was past the point where I could agree that certain compromises, certain changes in *Encounter,* would enable us to carry on together; and I was also sure that it was less a desire that I should stay on than that I shouldn't, at just

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this point, resign, that made him appear so pliable. I was now sure that I couldn't continue to work with him.

Round about this time there was a meeting of the trustees of *Encounter*. They were Sir William Hayter, former British ambassador in Moscow; Andrew Shonfield, of the London School of Economics; Edward Shils, as potent in Chicago as in Cambridge; and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Stephen Spender had also flown in. The trustees had never before, so far as I know, been convened or consulted about anything, and were before this moment only grand names on the writing paper. But they turned up, two straight off the plane from New York, at a lunch in a private room at Scott's restaurant, which was still in its old premises in Piccadilly, commanding a view of the Haymarket, which grew very familiar as the day wore on.

The meeting solved nothing; all I remember is that Spender became very agitated and announced that he was going off to look at some picture in the National Gallery to calm himself. When reminded of this years later, he warmly denied having done so, but I have a clear memory of the moment, no doubt because it seemed an odd yet not uncharacteristic thing for him to do in the midst of such a nerve-racked meeting; which only goes to show you shouldn't put too much trust in memoirs. However, I am sure this happened, whether or not Spender ever reached Trafalgar Square. I knew how passionate he was about what he regarded as the treachery of the congress. During the previous summer I had stayed with him at his house in Provence, and heard him on the telephone to Julius Fleishmann, whose Farfield Foundation was one of the congress's supporters, angrily but unavailingly demanding the truth. Spender and I, with a good deal of support from other people, including Isaiah Berlin and Stuart Hampshire, thought we could run *Encounter* honestly, and decided that if that course wasn't open we would resign and start a rival monthly, temporarily entitled *Counter-Encounter*.

We were all very excited. At the height of the fuss my mother died. A more sensible, a better man, would have called an indefinite time-out at this point; instead, I rushed to the Isle of Man, saw to everything that concerned me, and within four days returned to the crisis. I dare say it made me feel I was doing something important, and in a way I was: to defer mourning is an important mistake, a mistake of the kind that later exacts its price; the reflection that the mistake was made out of vanity increases that cost.

Cecil King now called a meeting in his office, his ostensible purpose being to reconcile the coeditors. Meanwhile, I talked to Rees, who was very bitter against Lasky – a day or two earlier I had heard him scream-

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ing abuse at the editor in his office. He kindly promised his full support. But on the day before the meeting in King's office at the *Daily Mirror* I telephoned Rees, by arrangement, at some country house where he was spending the weekend, and he announced peremptorily, almost contemptuously, and certainly without explanation or apology, that he had changed his mind and was now against me. What had occurred in the interim to convince him that his bread was buttered on the other side is a mystery, like so many of Goronwy's doings. Of course I had never supposed that his original decision to take my part had anything to do with simple goodwill toward me; he must for a time have miscalculated his personal advantage, as he had so often done before. And although his tone made me cross, I didn't suppose his defection made much difference to the balance of forces. It now occurs to me that I might have been wrong about this.

On the day of Cecil King's meeting, Lasky, to my naïve surprise, did not appear in the *Encounter* office, though James McAuley was, somewhat inexplicably, there. I was pleased to see him, so unexpectedly, after so many years; but he can have come only to see Lasky. However, he seemed unperturbed by Mel's absence. Perhaps he had already seen him, for any row about *Encounter* would be bound to have repercussions on *Quadrant* and the other journals in the congress stable.

I went off to the meeting with Spender's letter of resignation in my pocket, as well as my own; and Lord Goodman, who knew a lot about the newspaper world and feared for the innocent thrown into what he regarded as a very dangerous arena, came along too. So did the English trustees, Sir William Hayter and Andrew Shonfield. Mr. King was supported by Hugh Cudlipp. I was outclassed and had already been outmaneuvered. Lasky simply didn't appear; the whole matter had presumably been settled in advance. I explained why it was no longer possible for me to collaborate with my co-editor; it was simply that although I had no complaint about the present funding arrangements of *Encounter* I couldn't accept responsibility for what was done behind my back, or work happily with anybody who concealed from me the truth about the paper's covert allegiances, especially its formative past allegiances.

In his reply King made only two points. First, he had great admiration for Lasky as an editor. He was a journalist of rare quality. Moreover, as one who controlled more than two hundred periodical publications, he, King, knew all too well that once a paper began to decline it was almost impossible to rescue it. Since I agreed with what he said about Lasky's abilities and couldn't possibly argue that mine equaled them, I was unable to contest the implication that if I was left in sole

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charge, the fortunes of the paper would inevitably and irreversibly decline. So it was clear within minutes that I should have to hand over my letter of resignation and Spender's also. But King's second point was that he did not wish me to resign; indeed, he put this so strongly that it amounted to an attempt at prohibition. He said he thought Lasky and I had worked well together and should continue to do so. Why he thought that I don't know; virtually all my time on the paper had been spent in one struggle or another, with little effect on the contents. I expressed my gratitude for this expression of confidence but affirmed that it would make no difference to my decision, and I handed him the two letters. Sir William then said quietly that he would resign his trusteeship but not until the inevitable fuss died down. I understood this to be the correct diplomatic stance, but also felt that if Hayter's resignation had coincided with mine and Spender's, the outcome might have been different.

King then got me to promise that I'd say nothing to the press until I had word that both sides might do so simultaneously. I agreed; there seemed from my point of view nothing to be gained at this moment by making a fuss, though later, if we should ever get funds to start the *Counter-Encounter,* the position might change. Outside the *Mirror* building Lord Goodman, who had said nothing during the meeting, told me that I had behaved dangerously in crossing Cecil King, who could prevent my ever getting a job in London again. Although I wasn't in a position to deny this if what was meant was a job in journalism, I felt confident that even if King should have thought it worthwhile to persecute me, my academic employment was surely beyond his range. I remain sure of that, and still wonder how so wise a man as Goodman could have shared the popular overestimate of King's powers.

It would now be generally agreed that it was an overestimate. Soon after these events King was wrongly persuaded that he could topple the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, and replace him with Lord Mountbatten. Ben Pimlott, recording this extraordinary episode in his biography of Wilson, remarks that "one absolutely certain way to ensure the job security of a Labour leader is for a press baron to demand his removal." Strangely enough, the chair to which I had been invited at University College, London, was originally endowed by King's uncle, Alfred Harmsworth, Lord Northcliffe; but, to compare small things with great, I daresay that attempts to unseat me would have been equally unsuccessful. The truth is probably that the degree of irritation I caused him was far too slight to engage the interest of the great man for more than half an hour or so. Not so long afterwards, he was himself toppled by the

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board of the International Publishing Corporation, the real owners of those two hundred and more papers. According to Peter Wright's *Spycatcher,* King had expressed a willingness to help M15 in a "dirty tricks" campaign against the Wilson government; he was, according to Wright, a "long-term contact" of M15, an association which would have disposed him to be sympathetic to the covert cultural operations of the CIA.

After the meeting I went to Lord Goodman's flat. Less than an hour after our arrival there, Anthony Lewis of *The New York Times* was on the telephone asking for my version of the events at the *Mirror.* I suppose King extracted my vow of silence in order to get his version published first. If so the plot misfired, for the Sunday papers were full of the story, and told it in a manner that, without being particularly accurate, was not biased in favor of my opponents.

The reaction of *Encounter*'s contributors to these goings-on were various. Some had known or strongly suspected the truth already and saw no reason to stop writing for a journal that offered them space and a measure of celebrity, especially if they saw little harm in the funding of a virtuously anti-Communist publication by the CIA. Roy Jenkins smoothly remarked, "We had all known that it had been heavily subsidized from American sources, and it did not seem to me to be worse that these should turn out to be a U.S. government agency rather than, as I had vaguely understood, a Cincinnati gin distiller" – the reference is to Fleishmann and the bogus Farfield Foundation.

Not everybody took the matter so calmly. The need to choose sides might force amicable division in families: Lionel Trilling withdrew an article, Diana Trilling did not. My friend John Wain valued his association with *Encounter,* not least because he was a freelance writer who needed a journal where he could write at more length than the weeklies allowed, because he needed the fees, and because he approved of its politics; on the other hand, he felt that to continue working for the magazine would be disloyal to me, and he wrote to say that he had had to take a very long walk to make up his mind. He revoked his contract and dropped out of *Encounter,* though a few years later he was back. I felt that this compromise left me nothing to complain of; it wasn't my intention that he and his family should suffer out of fidelity to a cause that was not theirs but mine, and one I should probably never have put myself, let alone a friend, in the position of having to defend.

For some time efforts to start another monthly with pure financial support continued, and I remember waiting in several City anterooms with Stuart Hampshire, with no result; we had not even Dr. Johnson's

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satisfaction, for no moment came when we could reproach anybody for offering interest when we no longer needed it. There never was a *Counter-Encounter,* thought it might be said that *The London Review of Books,* a fortnightly that began at my instigation to appear in 1979, more than supplied the gap. *Encounter* itself struggled on, indefatigably soliciting American support, until, already almost forgotten, it expired in 1991.

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BANG! (the starter's pistol) and we begin.
Whatever you may have staked upon the race
There's something you will have to come to know

We can hear nothing in the thundering din;
The voice of comment dies without a trace.
No matter what you're saying: there they go!

With Surface scratched (to nobody's chagrin)
The gelding Hope maintains a lightning pace
Beside whom Possibility seems slow.

Now randy Yang pursues the fleeing Yin
Unwitting of the truth we all must face:
Whatever begins in joy will end in woe;

What do they flee from that must be within
Themselves? is it others, or Time they chase,
Hoping to reap what they won't have to sow?

To *"Come back home wid a pocket full ob tin"*
But not quite in the money's no disgrace;
Yet losing's in no way to win, although

We could remark that it all had been
– Given the facts that the particular case
Presented – quite unquestionably *vaut*

Le voyage; as when we go out for a spin
On some grand afternoon and at the base
Of a great hill, we turn, and in the glow

Of sunset, like a map on which we pin
Our hopes we see revealed the recent space
Of the plain we'd just climbed from, far below.

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Betting across the board may leave us in
Far deeper trouble than we might by grace
Of circumstance escape from. Even so

Here at the finish, nothing's left to win
Although, surely, something has taken place;
As always, the bottom line is all for show.

From the Notes of a Traveller

In the mountainous northern portion
Of X – there is a valley quite inaccessible
From adjacent ones, because of an earthquake
And subsequent rock-slides. It has
Been so for several hundred years. The village
Culture of this valley is quite like that
Of neighboring ones – the language the same,
Save for the preservation of a few older
Word-forms that changed elsewhere
Perhaps because of the influence of travellers' dialects.

But early twentieth-century explorers
All reported the same strange event:
During the course of all ordinary days –
As well as in the interstices of the ceremonial
Occasions on consecrated ones – a man,
Woman or child of the village might be observed
In brief conversational exchanges with one
Or more listeners. The speaker
Would tell some sort of story, marked
By significant, or perhaps merely structural,
Pauses. These little narratives,
Sometimes very brief, sometimes going
On for several minutes, each concluded in
A prominently framed and significantly
Delivered final utterance.

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At which almost immediately – with the quickness
Of response which the explorers were, in their
Own societies, accustomed to on the part
Of those being told a joke –
The listeners would silently weep.
And then stop,
And often, then perhaps catching another's eyes,
Might start, as with renewed vigor,
To weep again. It has not yet been determined
What other aberrations accompany this one, in this valley.

DAVE SMITH

Crying in the Streets

Self-hatred waits on us like the garbageman
spattered by our family's week of smells,
ready to leap down and swing and throw up
the pushed-in, packed, ballooning litters we
are unwilling to keep longer. His smile seethes
malice and love of this work. He takes truths
home free for the lifting, beauties we miss.
You can hear him crying out to stop the truck
that's wheezing and banging like history, voices
like pain in the streets. But his motions are
perfect as heartbeats; he is entirely discreet.
If you speak, he will turn away, or merely nod,
taking up our worst secrets, more punctual than God.

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A Map of Your Small Town

Sometimes there's nothing to write about, no news
the world wants to let go of, the sun held back,
answering machine aglow with its red emptiness,
even the house refusing its stoplight flash, its groan.
The cardinals and their babies flee deep in
some wooded otherwhere and traffic's taken a hike.
Mother said we'd need brass balls and sweet luck when
we found roaming what we did best, and dreaming.
Parked in the mental hospital's lot to talk,
we watched shadows move, dusk bled to black, and you
wanted to bolt like a shy horse, and no place
ahead called, secret, down roads I couldn't guess.
Joy flickered in lights on, off. Phones kept ringing.

EMILY HIESTAND

Large, with cheese, to go

High in the spring maple's froth
floats a box of blue light,
an Oz shining forth from an upper story
with tongues, fires, and catastrophes:
the "Eye on America" show.

A good city tree it is, whose branches
hold emanations, new rains,
and moiled hydrocarbons.
Her old arabesque of limbs
and volumes justly frames
the western sky, now closing
in a color just shy of thalo,
shading to dimitt's marine.

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Beneath her, I hold and carry
a warm cardboard thing in my arms,
a kind of perfection –
for on each such container,
in each of our cities,
it is printed: "The Best."

This best must be held
with both hands, level and formally,
(as when to a splendid queen,
the inlaid coffin is presented),
else the flat-earth, edible pie
inside will slide asunder.

How the commonplace pulls
the body into stately postures!
How the mind like green leaves follows.
How we process by stoops and hedges
with our fragrant burden.

In the blue flickering rooms,
citizens are laughing out loud,
I hear them laughing,
at the tales of a new and terrible Homer
whose 'toons have taken
the land of the buffalo by storm.
Like Audubon killed birds,
I break off a sprig to love it:

pliable forms and true leaves
are emerging from woody stems,
for all the world like infant bats
unfolding wet wings.

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JENNIFER CLARVOE

2217 *Platenstrasse*

I go back by counting lampposts out of the fog –
seven is the length of the street by morning,
bottle-green posts against the gray. Shining,

the posts will spill the light before the street,
the street before the vegetable man's cart
delivers his bright fruit. *Blutorangen,*

oranges bruised garnet; and, *Zuckermelone,*
we learn to click and pucker over the dark
small watermelons. Yes, we buy the vegetables,

but the names, the colors, are gifts. He saves *Blumenkohl*
for Timothy who is teething. Cauliflower,
flower cabbage, *Blumenkohl*. Given –

but how do we hold them? We kids just won't eat
brussels sprouts we bought as *Rosenkohl.*
Before dinner, we can't help it, we argue names,

any names, *Bully, Cry-baby,* racketing out
into the street, where we sing over each other
Don't run over me! don't run over me –

in true kid's cadence, hot, indefatigable
see-sawing scorn – so that the random traffic
screeched with us. And how we needed that screech,

the song about our danger – so we could chase
danger, as if each car hauled in a future
we didn't want, some name, the engine feeding

us to plugs, cranks, shocks – chase it through the frame
in the old home movie that catches in the projector,
flares and caramelizes, burnt out to the edges

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– so we could chase it away. Oblivious, wobbly
from laughing, we dance down slower revolutions,
like the scissor-grinder, who rides his bike

in one place, sharpening, humming. Silver street,
flat street, it must have been one or the other, or both
at different times. Silver like rain on the street,

flat like rain. On rainy nights flower vendors
come up in the stairwells with sugary freesia, mimosa.
Bouquets that glisten like names that have unloosened

their sense of obligation, those never tokens
by which you sense how much just is not given,
or not given again. And these remain

in flux, dissolving into wishes, wishes
crystallizing into gifts. Like this
silver like rain on the street, flat like rain.

We are saddened by the death of

Peter Shaw

1936-1995

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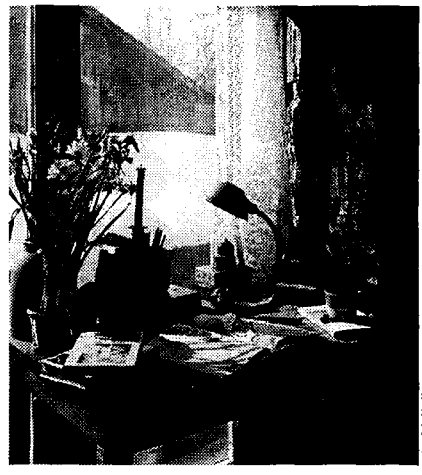

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Books

Reconsidering American Communism

THE SECRET WORLD OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM. By Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Fridrikh Igorevich Firsov. Yale University Press. $25.00.

In 1953, Sidney Hook created a storm of controversy, and hatred and opprobrium from most of the left, with his still much discussed article and book, *Heresy, Yes – Conspiracy, No.* Writing during the heyday of McCarthyism, Hook argued that the dismissal from teaching posts of some members of the American Communist Party had not been carried out unjustly. He had always defended the rights of teachers and scholars to espouse any views, including Communism, and he opposed the use of political association as a criteria for determining academic fitness. But he firmly believed that membership in the Communist Party itself rendered a teacher unfit to be a member of a teaching staff, insofar as that member firmly adhered to well-known tenets of Party membership.

For Hook, the key consideration was that the Communist Party was not just another left-wing American political party. Rather, Hook argued, it was a conspiracy. Reading through the recently published selection of his correspondence (*Letters of Sidney Hook: Democracy, Communism, and the Cold War*, edited by Edward S. Shapiro), one is impressed with how many times Hook comes back to this point. Individual Communists, he told one correspondent, were "all actual or potential agents of a foreign power." That did not mean they should be imprisoned, he admonished, but it certainly meant that they should be denied access to positions where if they obeyed orders given to them by the Party, they could damage American security. As Hook wrote:

> The relevant principle is that the facts about the C.P. justify us in drawing a *prima facie* case against members in respect to employability or reliability for certain types of jobs – teaching, the military, government. . . . The inference based on present and active membership is that the individual is likely to carry out the instructions, which he has voluntarily accepted, and that the sensible thing to do is to prevent him from doing it.

The Party, in other words, was a conspiracy. Its primary allegiance, and that of its members, was to a foreign government – the Soviet Union – whose regime and leadership it regarded as living gods. Watch-

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ing over them was not a witch-hunt, as so often alleged, since while there were no witches, there were Communists, and they were "agents of the Kremlin who for years have carefully infiltrated into many strategic places."

Hook's ideas created a furor, even among stalwarts of the democratic left. Irving Howe, himself an ardent early anti-Stalinist, wrote a polemic against Hook in the pages of the Shachtmanite newspaper he was then editing. Later, in his autobiography *A Margin of Hope,* Howe commented that it was "all a matter of perspective." Hook and his associates, Howe reasoned, should have saved their arrows for the fight against McCarthy, and not the battle against the anti-anti-Communists. Hence Howe disagreed with Hook and believed that membership in the Communist Party was not sufficient ground for a professor to be disqualified from university teaching. Howe, argued, as he remembers, that "the membership of the Party was heterogeneous in character, sentiment, and loyalty; that judgments about the conduct of professors should be made individually," and to act against them *en masse* would require "constant academic purges." Consequently, Howe believed that Hook's anti-Communism revealed a lack of sensitivity "to the danger McCarthyism represented for civil liberties."

That stance was actually a strange one for Howe to have taken. As co-author of an early book chronicling the history of the CPUSA, Howe was well aware, as he and Lewis Coser had written, that the Party was a "foreign national party" dedicated to and controlled by the Russian ruling class. The Party's cadre, they wrote, were "malleable objects"; true Stalinists were individuals reduced to "little more than a series of predictable and rigidly stereotyped responses." Since the time Howe and Coser produced that evaluation, a new generation of scholars have turned to the study of American Communism and have generated a plethora of revisionist work – dedicated to challenging the view of Howe and in particular that of Theodore Draper, whose pioneering works on American Communism established long ago that the Soviet connection was for American Communists the defining essence of their movement. The new revisionist view, exemplified most often by historian Maurice Isserman, a view that has become the dominant one in academic circles, is that the American Communist movement was a normal political party. While some of the historians in this group acknowledge the link to Moscow, they argue vociferously that American Communists were able to both bypass and transcend this umbilical cord. As Isserman saw it, the attempt to produce an Americanization of the Party stemmed not from response to a Russian stimulus, but from a compelling need

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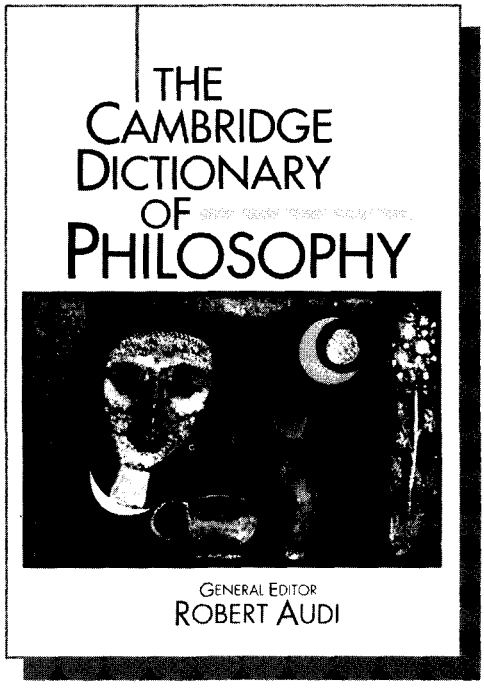

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within the Communists themselves, who could not help but "remain unaffected by new events and the accumulated weight of their own history." Thus, Isserman argues, American Communists sought to shape "the Party to fit their own needs and expectations."

Since the publication of his book, *Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party During the Second World War*, in 1982, Isserman has been joined by a slew of associates, all of whom have gone even further in arguing that the Party was basically an American party, whose membership gave lip service to Stalin and the Kremlin but whose cadre was motivated by the struggle for democracy at home. Indeed, as Draper commented a few years back in *The New York Review of Books*, their work has become somewhat of a "minor academic industry" devoted to the proposition that the Communists, as historian Roy Rosenzweig wrote, were "an authentic expression of the American radical tradition." It was a party, historian Gary Gerstle put it, in which the Popular Front period gave the Communists an "opportunity to act on their genuinely felt desires to adapt their radicalism to American political traditions and practice."

The great significance of *The Secret World of American Communism*, the first volume in Yale University Press's new series Annals of Communism, which presents documents from the recently opened archives of the former Soviet Union, is that it once and for all puts an end to this spurious historical debate, based as it was on self-fulfilling revisionist fantasies. As Klehr and Haynes write, "It is no longer possible to maintain that the Soviet Union did not fund the American party, that the CPUSA did not maintain a covert apparatus, and that the key leaders and cadres were innocent of connection with Soviet espionage operations." What the authors provide is the very substantiation for the position towards the Communists taken alone by Sidney Hook in the 1950s: the Party, according to Klehr and Haynes, was not a regular political organization but rather "a conspiracy financed by a hostile foreign power that recruited members for clandestine work, developed an elaborate underground apparatus, and used that apparatus to collaborate with espionage services of that power." The primary loyalty of its members was to the Soviet Union, not to the United States, and although its members thought of themselves as American radicals, the belief that American Communists were benign dissenters from the capitalist consensus, heretics in the democratic tradition, was in fact a great fiction. The documents in Klehr and Haynes's book prove without a shadow of a doubt that "the belief that the American Communist movement assisted Soviet intelligence and placed loyalty to the Soviet

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Union ahead of loyalty to the United States was well-founded" and that it was anything but "a domestic movement with its roots in America's democratic, populist, and revolutionary past."

What, in particular, are the highlights of this collection of documents? The authors set out to provide answers to three important questions: Was there a secret Communist apparatus? Did that body infiltrate government agencies? Did some Communists spy for the Soviet Union? The unqualified answer to the three questions is yes. Moreover, espionage was not a side activity of the Party; indeed, it was known to and carried out by top cadre. One of the major documents uncovered, for example, reveals that Earl Browder, the top Party chairman under whose helm the CPUSA had its greatest membership and influence during the World War II years, had ties to the NKVD (the predecessor of the KGB), and that his sister, Margaret, was a functioning Soviet intelligence agent, just as ex-Communist Benjamin Gitlow and Soviet intelligence defector Walter Krivitsky had charged. Soviet files contain a January 1938 memo from Earl Browder to Comintern chieftain Georgi Dimitrov, noting that his sister "has been working for the foreign department of the NKVD, in various European countries," and requesting that she be released lest Earl Browder's own "increasing involvement in national political affairs and growing connections in Washington political circles" be compromised and endanger his important political work for the Party. Browder, true to form, perjured himself when asked about the charges during his 1939 testimony before a Congressional committee.

The documents also substantiate charges made in the 1950s by the famed so-called "blonde Spy Queen," Elizabeth Bentley. Bentley had testified to the FBI, and later before Congress, that she and her lover Jacob Golos had been supplied with material from government agencies by a ring in Washington – led by economist Victor Perlo – which she had dubbed the "Perlo group." As the authors note, the liberal magazine *The Nation* had in 1948 editorially remarked that her charges were so "wanton" that they "hardly seem worth the dignity of denial." Indeed, as late as the 1970s, *Nation* editor Victor Navasky obliquely identified Perlo simply as a "New Deal economist." For the most part, historians were no less kind, finding Bentley's stories extravagant and most likely the neurotic imaginings of a bitter woman whose lover had suddenly died. But the authors have found three memos from NKVD head Pavel Fitin to Georgi Dimitrov, memos that support the essentials of Bentley's story. In particular, the files produced a "top secret" memo in which Fitin requested information for the NKVD on seven American Communists, all but one of them government workers later named by Bentley

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as sources from which she received espionage data. The memos show that the NKVD considered these people Party members, had a particular interest in them, and that this interest "coincided with the period in which Bentley said the NVKD was taking over and revetting the Golos espionage networks." True, it is not definite proof that these seven were agents, but if one puts two and two together, the conclusion is rather inescapable.

Moreover, the documents reveal that the American CP had a secret organ, the "Brother-Son" network whose main task was to ferret out the American A-bomb secret. Documents reveal that a New Yorker who fought in Spain with the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, Morris Cohen, was the main contact between Soviet intelligence and a still unnamed Los Alamos physicist – "Perseus" – who gave the U.S.S.R. the top American nuclear secrets. While many up to now have admitted that individual Communists, like the self-confessed Cohen, may have engaged in espionage for ideological reasons, it has been customary to separate the CPUSA itself from this work. But as Klehr and Haynes note, the Brother-Son network, headed by Rudy Baker, who also led the Party's domestic secret apparatus, had a direct link with the NKVD, all of which serves to demonstrate the CPUSA's "direct connection to Soviet atomic espionage against the United States."

When the Party was not engaged in intelligence and espionage work for the Soviets, it spent a great deal of time and energy on the purging and even execution in Spain of anti-fascists whom it accused of deviation, especially "Trotskyism." Indeed, uncovered documents show that some who had been listed as killed in battle during the Spanish Civil War had actually been executed after purge trials. Some were found guilty of ideological sins; others were accused of being spies; still others simply wanted to return home as promised after serving in particularly brutal campaigns. The members of this group were to be shot as deserters. The documentation on the Lincoln battalion alone suggests that few will any longer be able to indulge in romanticism about the role of the Communists in the Spanish Civil War.

Whatever their task, it is now obvious that the American Communists were Russian patriots first, Americans second. A case in point is that of Janet Weaver Ross, the American Communist *Daily Worker* correspondent in Moscow during the war. Ross did much more than report for the party organ. "She used her access to the American embassy," Klehr and Haynes write, "to prepare secret reports for the Comintern about what she heard in the embassy." Her communications were deemed so important that Dimitrov regularly forwarded them to Molo-

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tov, the Soviet foreign minister. These reports, giving the Russians background to conversations in an "Americans only" setting, gave the Soviets information of a type they otherwise, before the age of sophisticated bugging, would have had trouble obtaining. Unlike American correspondents, some of whom would be criticized for at times cooperating with American intelligence, Janet Ross was "an *American* correspondent assisting the *Soviet* government. She was in reality a Soviet patriot. As Dimitrov told Molotov . . . Ross was '*our* American correspondent comrade Janet Ross'."

Documents found also reveal that Edmund Stevens, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist who served for decades as Moscow correspondent of *The Christian Science Monitor,* was a secret member of the American Communist Party. Always known to be extremely pro-Soviet – Stevens had written his praises of the U.S.S.R. as a new form of democracy and had defended the Nazi-Soviet Pact – he received the Pulitzer Prize in 1952 for a book on the Soviet Union. Unlike other members of the American press, Stevens lived in luxury in a three-story mansion given to him by the Soviet government, and his Russian-born wife was allowed to leave the country with him and to send art out for exhibition and sale in New York. Stevens even once served as part of a government mission with Averell Harriman. The many rumors floating about the journalistic community, whose members suspected that Stevens had compromised himself with the Soviet government, turned out to be all too true.

The volume also contains substantiation of the charges made by Whittaker Chambers and others, concerning the nature and extent of Communist infiltration of the U.S. government during the New Deal era. As Klehr and Haynes observe, "many historians have failed to come to grips" with this issue, as well as with the "dubious nature of the Popular Front alliance between Communists and a segment of liberals during the 1930s and the 1940s." Historians, themselves sympathetic to the Front, tend to trivialize or downgrade assertions made by Chambers, Bentley, and others. But the documents, the authors note, "are too clear to avoid such evasions" and offer crucial support to a mass of evidence revealing both a substantial Communist presence in key government agencies, as well as evidence that these Communists regularly purloined government files for the purpose of transferring them to Moscow. Communists, of course, regularly denied such activity and condemned their accusers as "red-baiters." One result was the particular political legacy of this activity: the belief that anyone accused of perfidy by the McCarthyist right wing was intrinsically innocent of any wrong-doing.

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The documents prove, instead, that they were more than likely guilty. While the documents found by Klehr and Haynes do not mention Alger Hiss – their research was restricted to Comintern files, and they had no access to secret KGB records – they do bear out the essential story told by Whittaker Chambers and thereby indirectly add to his credibility regarding the charges he made against Alger Hiss. Document 32, for example, contains the text of a copy of a confidential letter from Ambassador William Bullitt to Judge R. W. Moore of the State Department. Document 33, comprised of the contents of a typed copy of a letter sent to President Roosevelt by William Dodd from Berlin in 1936, contains sensitive diplomatic information. These copied paragraphs were found in CPUSA files turned over to the Comintern for safekeeping. Who sent the files? There is no clue, but both letters were diplomatic correspondence generated by the office of Assistant Secretary Francis B. Sayre. As Klehr and Haynes point out, the letters are evidence that the activities of the CPUSA extended to much more than "abstract discussion of Marxism."

The Secret World of American Communism, therefore, is one of those seminal works of scholarship with important political considerations, and it has consequently obtained a great deal of attention and scores of reviews. Yet, it is apparent that much of the material that was uncovered is still considered controversial. As Hilton Kramer pointed out in a series of articles for *The New York Post,* although the volume was written up in a series of major articles by most newspapers in the country, it was almost totally ignored by *The New York Times,* probably because its editors did not want to endorse anti-Communism, lest they lend credence to a new round of red-baiting. *The Times*'s non-treatment of the Klehr-Haynes book contrasted dramatically with its front-page story in 1993, reporting that General Dmitri Volkogonov believed Alger Hiss had never been an agent of the Soviet Union. When General Volkogonov repudiated the original story, his retraction was buried deep inside the pages of *The Times*. Similarly, Klehr and Haynes establish that J. Peters, whom Whittaker Chambers had identified as head of the secret Party underground, was indeed precisely what Chambers said he was. But in 1978, when *The Nation* was engaged in its never-ending attempt to prove the innocence of Alger Hiss, it sought to undermine Chambers by writing about the notorious Peters. The magazine sent a reporter, Donald Kirk, to interview Peters, who was then still alive and living in exile in Communist Hungary. Peters dismissed the charges. "This is so stupid," he told Kirk, "the 'secret' Communist and the 'not-secret' Communist." Kirk left his short visit feeling badly for having "intruded

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on the inner contentment" that Peters and his wife finally had after "the turmoil of their lives in America." To *The Nation*, Peters was just another victim of McCarthyism. Yet among the documents printed in *The Secret World of American Communism* is a 1939 Comintern "Brief on the Work of the CPUSA Secret Apparatus," which notes it had already been in existence for four years and that "its operations have been directed for that entire period by Comrade Peters."

The force of these documents, has, understandably, put the revisionists of American Communism on the defensive. Writing in *The Nation* on June 12, 1995, Maurice Isserman acknowledges that Klehr and Haynes's thesis "has never before been put forward with such substantial documentation." Calling their book a "formidable achievement," Isserman writes that "no one will be able to write about the CPUSA in the future without reference to this volume." This achievement, however, does not mean for Isserman that American Communism's history will not "remain hotly contested historical terrain." For the rest of his nine-page review, he goes on to denigrate the significance of the authors' findings. Isserman first notes that the book has been well received by "the right's biggest guns." It is an old story; discredit the message by attacking the messenger. "Tumultuous gloating," he calls it, and comments that the response has more to do "with partisan calculation than historical clarification." The political right needs, Isserman claims, to find another way to once again demonize and marginalize the left.

Isserman proceeds to try and rescue his thesis by arguing that although it is true that the tie to the USSR discredited and harmed American Communism, American Communists as individuals still had a democratic and populist concern that motivated their politics. Because of their praiseworthy socialist ideals, Isserman argues, they contributed greatly to American democracy – in such efforts as "the struggles for industrial unionism and for racial equality"; struggles that eroded their support of Soviet-style socialism. Isserman, I'm afraid, tries too hard to rescue his moribund position. Whatever worthwhile efforts the American Communists engaged in, they were always carried out within the confines of policies dictated by Soviet needs, and when those needs conflicted with their own "goals," they quickly ditched or subordinated them to fit the needs of their Soviet sponsors.

Isserman also tries to make light of the espionage carried out by some Communists. After all, he implies, only a few Communists engaged in it, and percentage-wise, they made up a tiny drop of the Party cadre. The Klehr-Haynes book, he says, suggests only that "whether or not Communists were *actively* engaged in espionage . . . they certainly had

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the skills, the means, and the inclination to do so." This supposedly exonerates the Party from corruption. But the point is impeccably made: when asked to partake, many did, in the belief that their aid to the Soviets was helping the worker's revolution and the march toward future paradise on earth. And once one accepts this truth, then it is certainly the next step to acknowledge that government security agencies had a responsibility to watch carefully over Communists and to keep them out of sensitive government positions.

Other eminent historians have seen the book more favorably. Writing in *The New Republic,* Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. praised it, correctly noting that the documents prove "beyond any question that the American Party functioned as an instrument of Soviet espionage." As an old Cold-War liberal – indeed, creator of the concept of a vital center – Schlesinger never had any illusions about American Communists or about "the doctrine of Communist innocence." Yet he feels that the authors are "rather uncritical about American ex-Communists." He sees their defense of Whittaker Chambers as plausible, but that of Elizabeth Bentley, he writes, "is less so." In fact, the volume's section on Bentley is a model of scrupulous and careful scholarship, and the authors conclude, based on NKVD memos they found, that Bentley's story is in the main supported. It appears that Schlesinger has had somewhat of a failure of nerve in the face of the fact that those named by Bentley appear to include some who managed to hoodwink honest New Dealers into cooperating with them during the war years.

Schlesinger concludes by arguing that the authors, like the pro-Communists revisionists, have "a penchant for exaggerating the importance of the CPUSA." He says that they "overplay the impact of ephemeral Party members serving in marginal bureaus and congressional committee staffs." Looking back, he observes, "I don't think that the CPUSA had much influence on anything," that the New Deal, the CIO et al. "would have evolved in the same way if the CPUSA had never existed." This is certainly a case of history as wish-fulfillment. The fact is that the Communists were in key government agencies, not simply "ephemeral" backwater bureaus. They controlled many of the key CIO unions; they had scores of influential supporters in the entertainment industry, especially Hollywood; and they had tremendous influence in the forging of a pro-Soviet attitude among influential liberal opinion-makers. During the early Cold War, as Stalin was seeking to expand the Soviet empire abroad and break the back of Western policy, the Communists in Europe, and yes, in America, made up a key Second Front among the ranks of Stalin's supporters. One has only to look at the

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significant American intellectuals who willingly participated in the 1949 Waldorf "peace" conference organized by the Party – from Norman Mailer to Lillian Hellman – to have a glimpse of just how important the CPUSA was – even after the start of the Cold War.

It may be hard to accept that once-hated enemies on the right were more correct about the Communists than some anti-Communist liberals. But the beginning of political wisdom is the acceptance of truth, as hard as it is to take. And it is the great merit of this startling volume of documents offered to us by Harvey Klehr, John Haynes, and Fridrikh Firsov that it allows us, for the first time, to look at the documentation of which we have long been deprived, and put an end once and for all to the spurious debate about the supposed hidden merits of American Communists. "The opening of the Comintern's archives," the authors conclude, "frees us all from the cave" in which we had been trapped, and like the ex-Communist defectors, allows us to see things in their true light. The cave to which the authors refer is the one of anti-anti-Communism, whose practitioners believe, as the authors put it, that "concern about domestic Communism in the late 1940s and 1950s was without justification and constituted an authoritarian, anti-democratic attack on a movement whose only sin was to dissent from prevailing norms." What Klehr and his colleagues have proven is that the prevailing academic consensus about American Communism is totally false. American Communism was not a "normal part of American political life." It was, in reality, an extension of Soviet politics impacted upon the American landscape. Undoubtedly, the revisionists who have done so much over the years to mythologize and romanticize American Communists will continue in their endeavors. Their task, thankfully, will be next to impossible if the documentation in this volume is honestly taken into consideration.

RONALD RADOSH

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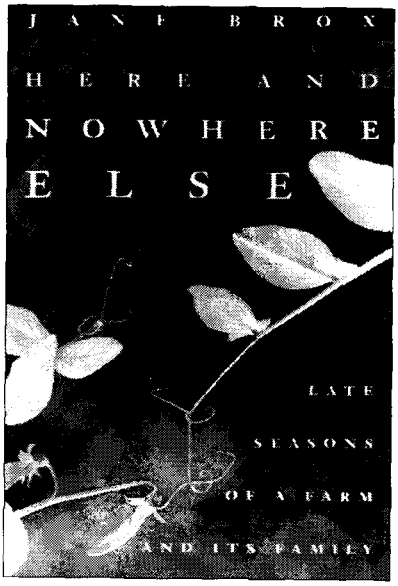

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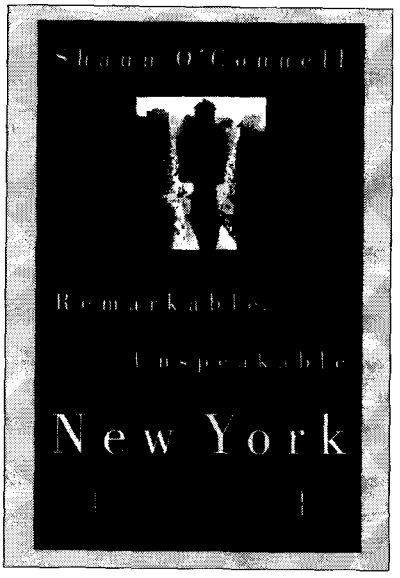

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Necropolis of the Heart

Ah! quelle nécrople que le coeur humain! Pourquoi aller aux cimetières? Ouvrons nos souvenirs, que de tombeaux! *

-Gustave Flaubert

THE INFORMATION. By Martin Amis. Crown Publishing Group. $24.00.
SABBATH'S THEATER. By Philip Roth. Houghton Mifflin Co. $24.95.

This has been a year of heavyweights. So many important novels have been published in recent months that lesser known writers tend to be overlooked. That's the unfortunate downside. The good news is that serious novelists still exist and that they continue to concern themselves with questions which have been familiar to artists for more than a century, deep and difficult questions like: is there any subject matter left for writers of fiction? Is a higher life possible for modern man? If men no longer have souls can we bear to examine their characters?

Messers Martin Amis and Philip Roth have a lot to tell us about the basic fix everybody is in, whether they tell it from the blissful peaks of postmodern decadence (where Amis hangs out), or while wallowing in the depths of sexual anarchy, lawlessness and depravity (Roth's territory). Each, in his own way, confronts the reader with the problem most vivid to the modern literary artist, so that we too are forced to consider whether there are artistic answers to the question of nihilism.

It will best serve my purpose as I take on this difficult project to begin with Amis, who has recently offered the public a new full length novel, *The Information*. Amis, after all, has a credo, which he has laid out for us in his own beautifully succinct prose: "Style is morality." If I may interpret freely, what this means is that it doesn't matter what happens in a book. It doesn't matter who the characters are. Flaubert, in giving us *Madame Bovary,* freed us long ago from considerations as trifling as subject matter. What counts is how you say what you say. In a recent article in the *New Yorker,* Amis speaks of the good writer's ability to hear the "thought-rhythms" peculiar to his time: "Implicit in these thought-rhythms are certain values, moral and aesthetic." This is a serious asser-

*Gustave Flaubert, Letter to Mlle. Leroyer de Chantepie Croisset, 4 November, 1857, in *Correspondance, II, 1851-1858*. Bibliotèque de la Pléiade: Paris, Gallimard, 1973.

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tion. It helps us understand why Amis has packed his book with the most unattractive characters you're likely to encounter outside a Tarentino movie. The significant actors here are the words themselves, or the magical combination of these words. They, and not the characters are meant to instruct, delight, amuse, and ultimately – and here's the radical bit – to create values. All there is of what is good and what is bad is in the words.

How then, does Amis write? There are only a handful of living authors who handle language as lovingly as he does (and here I am tempted to use Amis's own verbs – his language "swings," it "crackles," it "fizzes"). Now had I even a small portion of Amis's gift I would attempt to do for him what he did for Elmore Leonard in a recent review of that master's latest thriller, *Riding the Rap:* I would reduce his prose style to a single element. The essence of Leonard, Amis wrote, "is to be found in his use of the present participle," that "creamy, wandering, weak-verbed" tense. Who wouldn't be tempted, after encountering such a summation – as deadly accurate as it is charming – to launch a parallel campaign in search of the "essence" of Amis? Take any passage on any page of his new novel, and ask, what is the secret of his prose? Let's string together something as incidental as his various descriptions in these pages of dogs and have a look. Here, to begin with, is a snoozing mutt: "Giro's body was gathered steeply in sleep like an ancient hassock. (His other mode was all floppy and invertebrate, like a vast dog omelette . . .)"

This same dog is described as a "fat German Shepherd, more like a bear than a dog, with its scarf of tongue." And then there are the "cringing off-white dogs" at the "squalid disgrace" of a circus; or – and this is my all time favorite – a criminal's account of an outlaw dog's arrival at the hospital to visit the master he has savaged:

> . . . there Kirk lay, in the little room to himself, his face a Scalextric of stitches, when the door opens. It's Kirk's brother: Lee. With a big crackling hamper in his arms. Lee goes, "Fortnum's and Mason's," parks the hamper on the end of the bed and unclasps it. And this horrible head pops up. Beef the pit bull! Kirk spreads out his arms with tears in his eyes: "Beef boy. He's smiling! See that? He's that pleased to see me!"

So many are the dogs in the London world described by Amis that he is even led to name a playground in their honor. Quite naturally he can't resist a series of comic riffs on "Dogshit Park." There father and

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son are introduced to "park culture, which is something to see":

> Queuing at the snack stall with all the other weight problems and skin conditions, among the multiple single mothers in crayon-color beachwear, the splat and splotch of English skin, beneath treated hair, and the sticky children each needing its tin of drink, Richard watched the joggers pounding the outer track in scissoring shellsuits of magenta, turquoise, of lime or sherwood green . . .
>
> . . . One man and his dog went by the other way, man as thin as a fuse, dog as cocked and spherical as a rocket. The sloping green was mud, churned and studded, beige and dun, half soil, half shit. On the bench, Marco faced the prospect with the candid bewilderment of his gaze, turning and lifting his head, every few seconds, to his father's stunned profile.

Dogshit Park – where every dad may while away his Sunday afternoons, proud at least of having rescued the kids from kiddie videos (Decimator!) or the "Sinistors" and "Horrortroids" of kiddie TV:

> Dogshit – that verdant world, the ghost of Eden, so late our happy seat . . . From a distance the grass had a layer of silver or pewter in it: the promise or the memory of dew. Up close, its green was as municipal as paint. And then there were the formal flowers, the pudding bloom, the gladioli in their thin old-lady overcoats; the flower bed was Dogshit's flower hat. People, park wanderers, provided other colors, from other countries: spice and betel.

Amis, alas, is too protean for this reviewer's grasp. (I pass this challenge on to you, dear reader and fellow sleuth.) Just when I think I have the writer pinned as metaphor king (who else would write about a "star-bright brassiere"), I am bowled over by a run of adjectives ("The whispering girls with their wavering vowels"). And what about those crackling verbs, or is it the pairs of verbs that so astound (the fat man whose "folds seemed to slur and slobber over two seats," things that "swivel and realign," the child engrossed in "ensnaring and entwining various animal figurines," or our hero Richard's unlaundered socks that "cracked and creaked to his touch"? Amis seems to have mastered every form, measured every word, meted out every meticulous ounce of punctuation, about which he is notoriously prickly and proud. (Never mind the large advance, the recent divorce, the new teeth, the focus of so much silly *Sturm und Drang* in the British and American press over the

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last months: the real way to get Amis's goat, as an L.A. interviewer recently discovered, is to quibble over his commas and colons.)

My guess would be that an infinitely varied and eclectic combination of words, is at the heart of Amis's style. These combinations are what produce his characteristic feeling-tone. They surprise, they make us laugh, re-read and marvel. And ultimately these innovative configurations produce what Amis calls the "thought-rhythms" in his work. Here, for instance, is Richard Tull, failed novelist and *The Information*'s protagonist, sweating over a book review, and trying to turn up *the* right word. Should his sentence begin with "Whereas," or "While" or perhaps "Whilst"?

> What was it with whilst? A scrupulous archaism – like the standard book review. Like the standard book. It was not the words themselves what were prim and sprightly polite, but their configurations, which answered to various old-time rhythms of thought. Where were the new rhythms – were there any out there yet? Richard sometimes fancied that his fiction was looking for the new rhythms.

Richard Tull hasn't found these rhythms. He thinks of himself as a "modernist." The problem is, he's not ready for the thing that must come next: "These rhythms, these rhythms of thought – he just didn't know these rhythms, and that was that." Martin Amis knows the rhythms. And what comes next is what he himself invents.

Having said that language is the show-stopping diva in this novel, I pause and take a step back. What of the characters, the plot, the thematic content? Are they of no interest at all? There certainly is a plot, which begins with Richard schlepping the vacuum cleaner down the stairs to the repair shop and ends with his lugging it home, wrapped in its coils, Amis writes, like the Laöcoon. And roughly speaking, all of the action revolves around Richard's attempts to bring down his rival, fellow-novelist Gwyn Barry. Gwyn, always on the look-out for "reality-softeners" is all surface, shine, gloss, ease, health – the very picture of worldly success. He may write "like a whuss," but his *Amelior,* a bland simpleminded pastoral tale is a runaway bestseller. We're talking a step down from the junk novel here: What Gwyn produces are "trex" novels.

Now what is "trex?" I suspect that this infinitely versatile word is one that Amis coined himself, as in "slapping some slice of trex onto a frying pan," or finding on one's desk "many sloping stacks of assorted trex," or the look of "white skin . . . carved from the purest trex."

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To return to Richard, the park-going parent and author of several novels no one can read: his prose is hopelessly intricate and complex. His latest labor, *Untitled,* makes its readers physically ill (try to get past page nine without winding up in the hospital). But Richard is a serious writer. He stands his ground for "the not-so-worldly, the contorted, the difficult." Everything about this man ought properly to arouse sympathy and attachment, primarily because the humor with which his troubles are described is so rich. Whether Richard is winding himself up to deliver a "passionate speech" ("You don't think that's extraordinary? Oh, but it is. Try and think of the last time you did it."), or overcoming his revulsion and forcing himself to face his job at the Tantalus Press, a vanity publishing house where he does his best to remain gainfully employed ("the Tantalus howled to the talentless: the talentless howled back"), or stealing the time to write at home while his son Marco balances a toy on various parts of his anatomy and intones "does that bolla you?" the reader is with him. Even when Richard is wrestling with mid-life traumas – everything from bathing compulsively to rid himself of repellent (imaginary) odors, to fighting off a full-blown attack of sexual impotence, we gladly consent to be amused. How can we help but be intrigued by a man whose idea of revenge is to deliver to the home of Gwyn, his literary rival, a copy of the Sunday *L. A. Times,* ("that forest-razing suitcase of smeared print), with the following note attached, "Dear Gwyn, Something to interest you here. The price of fame! Yours ever, John." Of course such a trick is bound to backfire and it will be Richard himself who sifts the paper for a reference to Gwyn.

But Amis hasn't even begun. What kind of postmodern decadent novel would give us a lovable comic hero and his long-suffering virtuous wife on the one side and on the other a rich creep, untalented, married to a depressed aristocratic wife? The mirror held up to *this* world must reflect nothing but slovenly ugliness. No freshness here, no morality, no purity, no loyalty, no innocence. As for love – heaven forbid! To get down and dirty is, in these circumstances, inescapable. Richard will be obliged to make his pact with Steve Cousins – with Scozz, the quintessential post-modern decadent devil – and make *him* the instrument of his revenge. And then everybody will be infected by the evil, and assigned a role in the low-life London nightmare that Scozzy represents. (Richard: What do you do for a living? Scozz – with a shrug – "I fuck people up.")

Once you get used to the language spoken by Amis's thugs – and I have to admit, it wasn't until my second time through the novel that I had any idea what Scozz and Co. (characters with names like Thirteen

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and Belladonna and Darko and Crash) were saying – this seething underground world becomes one of the most interesting parts of the novel. Consider Scozz, whose features, in certain lights, "seemed to consist of shifting planes and lenses, like a suspect's face pixelated for the TV screen; smeared and done in squares; blurred, and done in boxes." At first it seems that this fuzzy external impression is all we are to have of this character. But Amis intends to sharpen the focus, to share Scozzy's secrets with us, to take us inside his den, his apartment where he sits naked in a leather chair, watching porn videos. When Scozz goes to work – so several characters who have seen him set about it will testify – he doesn't stop. But what he can't decide, what he's trying throughout the novel to decide, is just who it is he wants to hurt. We see him watching a pleasant domestic gathering. A mom and two girls at the kitchen table:

> He knew how quickly and radically he could transform this scene. Scozzy had a chaos organized in his mind, and ready to go. You're coming into their place but really you're taking them to your place: which is a world of fear. Which you know like the back of your hand. And they've never been there before, even though it's home.

Amis's wickedly comic vein does not run out here. (Scozz, it so happens, is Richard Tull's only serious reader), but he leaves no doubt that this is for him a tragic theme. His London is teeming with potential child-abusers. He has poor Richard raging (repeatedly and ineffectively) against a "swine in a German car, ripping down my road at sixty miles an hour to kill my kids." Even the children in the park look like child-murderers. Finally, the book is partially dedicated to the memory of Lucy Partington, a favorite cousin of Amis's who was abducted as a girl, and whose body was only recently discovered.

Dark characters, dismal themes – these are in keeping with our expectations. For the modern novel hasn't just given up on traditional subject matter, it has rather sought, and sought with a vengeance, its antithesis. If there is no more innocence, fidelity, or gentle feeling there is certainly no shortage of perfidy, intent to injure and desire to be revenged. There may be no transcendence, but there is content. For innocence, fidelity etc., are all turned inside out. Here, as in so many modern books, we are invited to stare into the void. But instead of emptiness we find information – or a deformation of data presented as information. Our modern novelists smile with pity at Keats's "Beauty is Truth," but are unwilling to see their own "Ugliness is Truth" as equally hypothetical and, more to the point, philosophically naive.

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According to a 'colleague' who knows Scozz well, he is "all bad news, all terrible information." That's what the novel is about: bad news presenting itself as "The Information." Are these voids navigable? Yes, thanks to Amis's comic gift they are a pleasure cruise, more than navigable. But why is it that we feel so confident about our rush to embrace bad news as Truth, as Reality. There seems to be an unexamined Heideggerian premise lurking behind the self-congratulation implicit in the severity of this attitude. We're in such a hurry not to be duped by Gwyn-style 'reality-avoidance' that we join the nihilist stampede and rush into a groundless and almost punitive declaration about the nature of reality. Okay, so what is this precious information? It is the news of our own mortality. It is the scoop on death, and on all the diseases, the dread, decay and pain that precede it. With Amis this in not mere metaphysical rambling. He has from the first had a feeling for the D-words. As far back as *The Rachel Papers* he was on a first-name basis with Despair. In *Money* and *London Fields* we endure the sickness unto death in the dead of the night, and more of the same in the morning when we look into the mirror. *The Information* takes us farther from solace than we have been before. Think of it this way: If the old novel has been about Love and Death, the theme of the new novel, the non-innocent one, is just Death. The first move will be to cut all attachments and dismiss all connectedness (bye-bye E. M. Forster and his moronic slogan "only connect"). Richard Tull has a recurring vision: he sees himself, suitcase in hand, on his way to the callbox. Whom should he call? Exiled, where should he go? What if there is no one to love or to be loved by? The truly modern hero, if there is a grain of decency in him, must necessarily be alone. Moreover, his thoughts and actions have made him so disagreeable to the reader that he never will be missed. When all grounds for attachment have been removed, we are relieved from the necessity of grieving for anyone's death. What's Death without Love? Our post-modern decadent novelists (philosophers of death) will have abolished death as a subject too.

But we've jumped ahead of ourselves. Does no one love Richard Tull? If you're looking in the usual places (wife, mistress) you'll be sorely disappointed. Amis intends to convince even the most devoted believer in passionate love, in married love that his belief cannot be justified. No ground can be found for it. One of Richard's twin sons, however, Marco, the lastborn, "clinging, garrulous and ill" certainly loves his Dad. This kid has asthma. He is often absent from school. He has a learning disability. There is also more awareness, more feeling, more generous impulse in him than in all the other characters in the novel:

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> Illness, summer days spent at home, younger-brotherdom and consciousness that just by being who he was caused anxiety and exasperation – and desperate fatigue – in his parents (he understood, even when times were very bad, that it was not him they hated but the things inside him that made him cough and smolder and effloresce, and cry at night after dreams had left him inconsolable; he *was* inconsolable; he could not be consoled): all this had made Marco more vigilant, more sensibly watchful, than a six-year old would normally have need or reason to be. Adults were not other to him. Not remote and massively autonomous and alive only insofar as they maintained his domes of pain and pleasure. He knew that adults, too, were small, and pushed and tugged by many forces. Marco knew grownups. Very often he hung out with them all day and all night long . . . .

Marco's sensitivity seems to increase in direct proportion to the static in his father's life. When he is not brooding about his "secred idendidy," the kid is focusing all his energy on daddy's troubles. Alert and inventive, Marco performs the tasks of comfort and consolation. For he has discovered his *telos:* "Helping Daddy, in whatever he does. Each day." (His childish efforts to serve his dad's needs are subject to gross- and often hilarious – misinterpretation by Richard.)

So there *is* one sympathetic portrait in this novel. You can't help but love this kid. *He* seems to me to be the *non*-postmodern-decadent center of the novel. And so I suggest that the reader bear in mind the following questions, as he hacks his way through the urban jungle undergrowth of this book: Will Marco too end in the dismal swamp of nihilism? Suppose that Marco and Scozz were to meet – would the lion lie down with the lamb? It's worth finding out.

Seasoned sophisticates who are proud of having "seen everything" have been put to the test by Philip Roth. I have heard them respond to the extracts from *Sabbath's Theater* printed recently in *The New Yorker* with epithets like "Drugged-out madman!" "Misogynist!" "Pornographer!" Just wait until they see the rest of the book.

Try this on: The book's principal figure, Mickey Sabbath, is rooting around for dirty pictures in a young girl's dresser drawers:

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> Not even Yahweh, Jesus, and Allah have been able to stamp out the fun you can have with a Polaroid. Gloria Steinem herself can't do it. In the contest between Yahweh, Jesus, Allah, and Gloria on the one side and on the other the innermost itch that gives life its tingle, I'll give you the three boys and Gloria and eighteen points.

Rushdie limited himself to Allah. What is Roth up to? Can he count on the FBI to protect him from the anger of Jews, Christians, *and* Muslims?

Yes, the book is outrageous. It is so explosive that if there were still a serious reading public to be rocked, there would be an uproar over what Roth has wrought. Instead we have a letter of mild protest in the *New Yorker* reminding us of the legal definition of obscenity. And no doubt there will be a bitchy review in one of the "literary" papers by a militant defender of the feminist faith. After that the morally righteous will have to go back to the newspapers for their daily outrage-fix.

It is too bad that the feeling and intelligent audience (if such there be), for whom Roth has written this most serious comic novel, will be so put off by his first chapter that they may read no more. I can't promise that with reading the subject matter will become less sticky (okay – let's call a spade a spade – pornographic); it will not. In fact, Roth continues to the very end to up the ante (on the principle of something for everyone). So if you manage to get through the first few chapters without being unendurably offended, you will certainly find something to gross you out before you have finished. This is done designedly by the author. For he has given us a protagonist on the rocks, a man headed for full collapse. Mickey Sabbath will tell you so himself:

> Wifeless, mistressless, penniless, vocationless, homeless . . . and now, to top things off, on the run. If he weren't too old to go back to sea, if his fingers weren't crippled, if Morty [the brother] had lived and Nikki [the first wife] hadn't been insane, or he hadn't been – if there weren't war, lunacy, perversity, sickness, imbecility, suicide, and death, chances were he'd be in a lot better shape. He'd paid the full price for art, only he hadn't made any. He'd suffered all the old-fashioned artistic sufferings – isolation, poverty, despair, mental and physical obstruction – and nobody knew or cared. And though nobody knowing or caring was another form of artistic suffering, in his case it had no artistic meaning. He was just someone who had grown ugly, old, and embittered, one of billions.

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Before we go further, it may be useful to return to Amis for a moment. In Amis's novel, Richard Tull has many ideas for books he will never write. Here is Tull's sketch for one of them, "The History of Increasing Humiliation":

> It would be a book accounting for the decline in the status and virtue of literary protagonists. First gods, then demigods, then kings, then great warriors, great lovers, then burghers and merchants and vicars and doctors and lawyers. Then social realism: you. Then irony: me. Then maniacs and murderers, tramps, mobs, rabble, flotsam, vermin.

Had Amis's fictional novelist seen this project through he might have found full support for his thesis in Roth's Mickey Sabbath. Without any preliminaries Roth introduces us to a "hero" who has turned his longtime mistress Drenka Balich into a whore, has been "publicly disgraced for the gross sexual harassment of a girl forty years his junior," and has all the while sponged on his wife, driving her to drink and eventually into a psychiatric institution. All this in the first few pages of *Sabbath's Theater*. No time is lost in making everything clear. Sabbath wishes to be seen at once as a self-appointed professor of the "lower life," a man for whom "indecency" is a "dietary supplement," and whose principle it is to be unprincipled.

Now it might be argued that it is awfully difficult nowadays, perhaps impossible, to produce a fictional character who is capable of ruffling modern readers. Even a character whose motto is "affront and affront and affront" and whose chief delight is "to overawe and horrify ordinary people" would have no easy time of it with a readership whose imagination has been O. J.-ed. This summer alone we have Congressmen indulging in telephone sex with minors, and mothers drowning their children because their boyfriends wish it, neighbors raping and murdering infants, Serbs exterminating Bosnians. But as Roth knows only too well, we still have our taboos, and even if those taboos have been inverted, it remains possible to make a reader squirm. The sites where morality used to dwell are empty, but they continue to smell of morality. Attacks on feminists go a long way, and there are always irresistible combinations like sex and death (men who masturbate on the grave of the beloved, embalmers with that lustful necrophiliac look). And then there is proscribed race-hatred (Jap-bashing, at this solemn moment when we should remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki). Add to this child-molestation, and the abuse of vulnerable alcoholic women. Mickey Sabbath is equal to

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this and to every other challenge. Now why on earth, you may already be wondering, should I wish to praise an author who declares himself ready to pierce the armor of a public that considers itself beyond provocation?

Bear with me.

From the age of seventeen when Mickey shipped out as a merchant seaman on the "Romance Run" (whores at every port), and when later he becomes a puppet master and director of "The Indecent Theater of Manhattan," the well-muscled, green-eyed, cocky rebel has opted for anarchy – "simply for the fun of it." His "sexed-up and lawless" ways make him "thrillingly alien" even to his friends. Although he is anything but a faithful and loving husband, when Mickey's beautiful and fragile actress wife Nikki suddenly vanishes, things begin to go badly for him. This is a loss he cannot absorb (much like the loss that ruined his mother's life when her eldest son Morty went down during the Second World War). Every woman in Manhattan exists to remind Mickey of Nikki's disappearance. And so he turns his mistress Roseanna into his second wife, and the pair go into exile – settling in a town called Madamaska Falls. This is where Roth's story begins, a full thirty years after those heaving, emotional Manhattan days. Things now have gone from bad to worse, and Sabbath has become a confirmed failure – fat, ugly, arthritic, old. But he is more outrageous than ever. He still thrives on "making people uncomfortable, comfortable people especially."

Madamaska Falls has offered certain diversions: each year in his puppet-workshop there have been coeds to seduce, and in his mistress Drenka he finally discovers his female double – a woman who wouldn't hear of "self-righteously suppressing the satanic side of sex." (Such a slew of sibilants you seldom see!) To disintegration Mickey has put up no resistance – or as he phrases it, Roseanna has turned to drink while he has turned to Drenka.

Such is Sabbath as midlife ends. He has been pleased with the way he has blustered and blundered and bullied his way to clarity. The quest for clarity demands that restraint, limitations, taboos be kicked over, violated. Even the Commandments are thrown upon the compost heap of desire. It has been Mickey Sabbath's strategy to inure himself "to the limitless contradictions that enshroud us in life." He takes pride in being the last of the realists, a man with "a full understanding of what is going on." Sexual excess, satisfying his "most vital need," has been at the center of his high-energy, God-is-dead, all-is-permitted existence. He, however, is no simple satyr. Crippled, he makes up for his lost dexterity with verbal ferocity. Much thought and eloquence have gone into the existence he has devised for himself.

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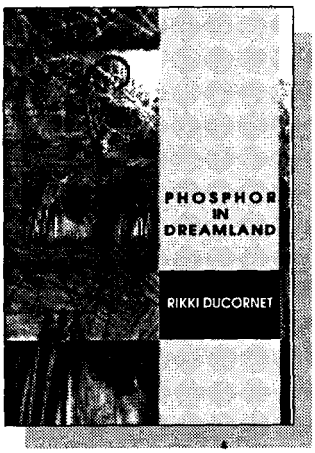

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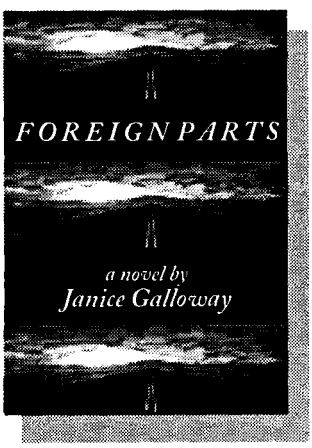

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a novel by Janice Galloway

Upon its publication in Great Britain, *Foreign Parts* was described as "a road movie for feminists...a funny, sharp and gutsy portrayal of female friendship," and "a painstakingly crafted, multi-layered investigation of contemporary female experience." What begins as a driving holiday in northern France for two Scotswomen turns into a caustic and funny account of dysfunctional relationships—both between men and women and between women friends.

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But Sabbath has grown older. What preoccupies him now is how one goes about setting a course for oneself in these godless, soulless times. In the absence of a higher life, what is a man to do? Mickey – or is it Roth? – seems to have taken his cue from a poem by Yeats read at sea when he was little more than a boy. Yeats had written in "Meru": "Ravening, raging, uprooting that he may come/ Into the desolation of reality." Better Mickey's own "relentless mischief," "cunning negativity,""oppositional exuberance," satire, wit, chaos even, than the pale, timid, meek, normal, decent, healthy representation of *ordinary* life that seems to have swept the country from Madamaska Falls to Manhattan to L. A.

Conventional ways of speaking, of organizing life, of educating (indoctrinating) kids, bring out the brazen bull of protest in Sabbath. While tearing his way through the personal effects of Deborah, the aforementioned young girl whose parents have given him shelter, he discovers among her notebooks, her teddybears, her underwear that she, too, had studied Yeats's "Meru." Here Roth treats us to an excerpt from the kid's college notebook: "Class criticized poem for its lack of a woman's perspective. Note the unconscious gender privileging – his terror, his glory, his (phallic) monuments." Sabbath concludes that dear young Deborah would be well-advised to take her junior year abroad in Bahia – the raunchy Brazilian port where he received his higher education from prostitutes: "Learn more about creative writing in one month in Bahia than in four years at Brown."

The morally righteous, the many who jog and who, when they have caught their breaths counsel us to share and to care ("the eloquence of blockheads"), the well-intentioned healers (in institutions, hospitals, and AA meetings), the educators, the *bien pensants* have no answers to any real question whatsoever. They specialize in diagnosing everyone as a victim of child abuse or incest and soothe all sufferings with Prozac. These are the makers, Roth tells us, of an "Age of Total Schlock" – flat, boring, passionless, sexless, dead.

And so wicked Sabbath continues to follow his

> . . . laughable hunger for more. More defeat! More disappointment! More deceit! More loneliness! More arthritis! More missionaries! God willing, more cunt! More disastrous entanglement in everything. For a pure sense of being tumultuously alive, you can't beat the nasty side of existence.

Now if this, dear reader, sounds to you like still more Nietzsche re-

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warmed on the fading coals of Sabbath's nihilistic fire, do not dismiss the man. He has more to tell you. More serious developments in *Sabbath's Theater* will reward your patience. Roth has not solicited your attention in order to bait the middle class, or if you prefer, to give you yet another free spirit raging against the degenerate creature called by Zarathustra the "last man."

Sabbath's defense of the "lower life," his delight in being the "town-polluter," his goal of achieving "unrelenting frenzy" with Drenka, are for a time a source of "solace and satisfaction," yet the abyss is there, waiting, yawning. The comic expression of what has happened is in Drenka's first utterance – the sentence with which the book begins: "Either forswear fucking others or the affair is over." Drenka has suddenly been "seized by the taboos." It isn't long before the reader learns that her uncharacteristic demand for fidelity is no absurd whim – she is dying of cancer. And with the expectation of death, "their whole carnal edifice" caves in.

Oddly enough for a novel classed as pornographic, the book begins with Mickey's realization that for him sex games are all but over. At the end of a life devoted to lust something else comes to take its place, and for the first time Sabbath has a sharp awareness of what that something is: "Nothing but death, death and the dead . . . " He has had some intimations already that there is more to existence than adultery and finitude. For like his beloved older brother Morty, who died in the War, "he'd grown up on endlessness and his mother." And nihilism be damned, there had been no denying that their mother had a soul:

> Sabbath felt something close to veneration for that natural sense of a destiny she'd enjoyed and, too – in a woman with as physical a life as a horse's – for the soul embedded in all that vibrating energy, a soul as unmistakably present as the odorous cakes baking in the oven after school.

The cruel deaths of brother, mother, father; the disappearance of Nikki, had long stood as sufficient proof for Mickey that his childhood vision was false: "endlessness is the fantasy, and finitude the fact." I'm going to argue that *Sabbath's Theater* is about Sabbath's recovery (possibly temporary) of this vanished childhood premise. Ferocious Mickey is going to put up a fierce resistance against the reemergence of the soul, of the infinite, and of certain primal feelings. And who is the opponent he will fight? The counter-arguments come from the mouth of Mickey's mother's ghost. She will appear to her wayward boy at the most

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awkward moments. He may be a realist, but how can he refuse to communicate with his own dead mother? Especially a mother who answers your protests like this:

> The Son: "Leave me be. Shut up. You don't exist. There are no ghosts."
> The Mother: "Wrong. There are only ghosts."

Death, loss – Mickey's mother tells him – these are the things you have pondered so long and know so little about. Well, Mickey is going to learn, straying among the dying and wandering from graveyard to graveyard, in search, so he believes, of the courage to put an end to his own bankrupt existence and of a way to join his dead. The most stirring pages of this novel have to do with death. Quotations from *King Lear* and *The Tempest* are not out of place, even when they mingle with the most bizarre comic turns. Roth has focused the full force of his comic genius on the theme of loss, "the absence of presence," and some of his most powerful writing to date comes from this mixture of contraries. I don't believe there is anything in all of his published work to match the description in *Sabbath's Theater* of the death of Nikki's mother. Nikki herself is unable to find anything to which her response to "a dear one's death could mercifully cohere." Roth lays it bare: what we're looking at is death without religion, without ritual, without a vestige of support from tradition, philosophy, or art. Death has become a mortal house stripped of all furniture. All who mattered have been snatched away. Every character in this book has been deformed by the vanishing of his beloved dead. What will Sabbath's losses produce? Suicide? Conversion? Further excesses? More hatred? A reaffirmation of nihilistic principles?

Here Roth surprises us by moving from dialectic to the recovery of feeling. In the penultimate pages he will refer us to long-neglected affects which not even Mickey's excesses have been able to destroy. There is something like a Socratic confession of ignorance in what Sabbath discovers: "If there was ever anything to know, now he knew he had never known it." Don't be expecting conversion and saintliness from the unregenerate Roth. Mickey's perverse antics continue to the end. But it's all worth reading for a revelation like the one that descends upon Sabbath as he stands, his goatish beard dripping rain, by the family plot:

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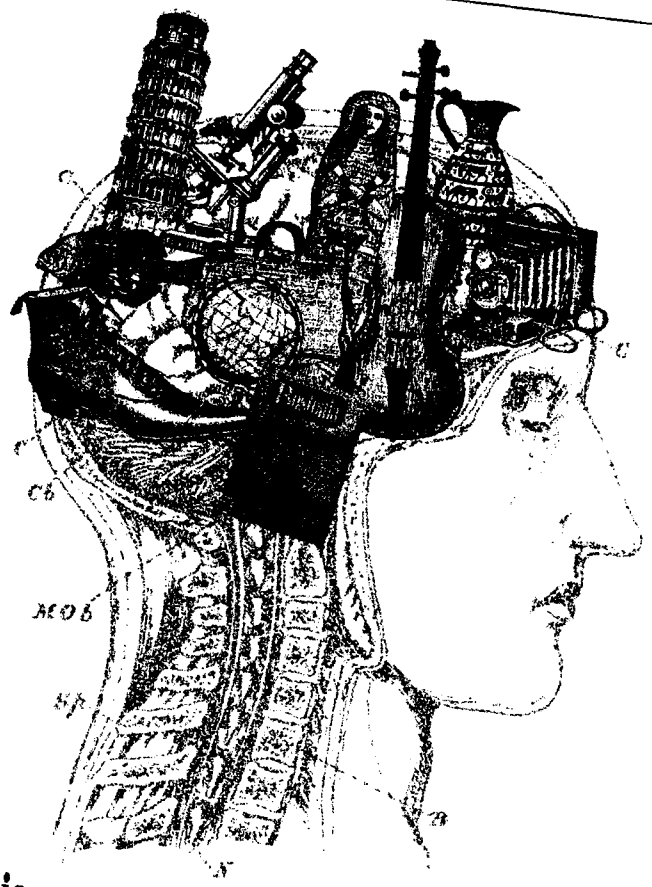

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> "There. There!" and the walls of embitterment were crashing down; the surface of something long unexposed – Sabbath's soul? The film of his soul? – was illuminated by happiness. As close as a substanceless substance can come to being physically caressed.

We are not likely, without doing violence to something we all understand so well, to dispute the reality of such an experience. The Mickey who had convinced himself that "profound hatred" is the only juice that keeps the old motor running suddenly finds himself bouyed up by a sea of deep feelings. Still under the influence of these feelings he discovers Fish, a cousin long thought dead, living out his last days in the same seaside ruin he had inhabited when Sabbath was a boy. A new energy enters the book. Here lives one-hundred year-old Fish: a kind of ancient conglomerate still containing pebbles of old habits, of fussing and mumbling and Jewish intonations, even vestiges of old-country irony. Affectionate inquiry, heart-pounding excitement on Mickey's part. You must know me: "I'm Mickey. I'm Yetta's son. My brother was Morty." Pages of patient examination and prodding, a one-sided reminiscence really, but drawn with such tenderness and longing that they scarcely seem connected to the rest of the novel.

For hundreds of pages we have been following Mickey the "anti-illusionist," whose peculiar power comes from "being no one with anything much to lose." Then we discover a link to the time before he became "no one," and we learn that he began life fully-equipped, anchored, connected, in full possession of

> The original ballast, an attachment to those who were nearby when we were learning what feeling was all about, an attachment maybe not stranger but stronger even than the erotic.

What remains of this ballast? Its weight has diminished in direct proportion to the extinction of those he loved. By now it is as attenuated as the centenarian Fish, who inspires in Mickey an urge to "pick him up and put him on his lap."

Concluding, I am aware of having tried to argue that *Sabbath's Theater* is an oddly soulful book, that I have been peddling transcendence, making it appear that *this* White Whale, though bristling with harpoons, is at heart a lovely kind of creature. But make no mistake about it: all love, all affection in this novel, all real feeling is with the

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dead.

Roth is inviting us to inhabit a world bereft of love, to stand in the pouring rain in a rundown graveyard policed by German Shepherd dogs and with him to recite the roll call of tombstone names. It is absurd to hunt for signs of growth or new life. This is a book about the end of things. The end of art. The end of meaningful existence. The end of connectedness, energy, hope. Malice and grief are what are left to us, and, too, the persistent itch for a fight. What would Roth say to disappointed idealists, to those backward believers in love among us, and to those who are eager to say that this time he has gone too far? He would probably reply in the words of Mickey Sabbath:

> To everyone he had ever horrified, to the appalled who'd considered him a dangerous man, loathsome, degenerate, and gross . . . "Not at all! My failure is failing to have gone far enough! My failure is not having gone further!

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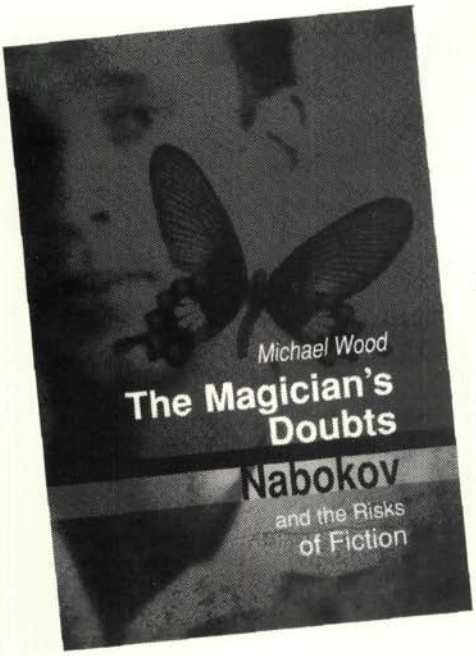

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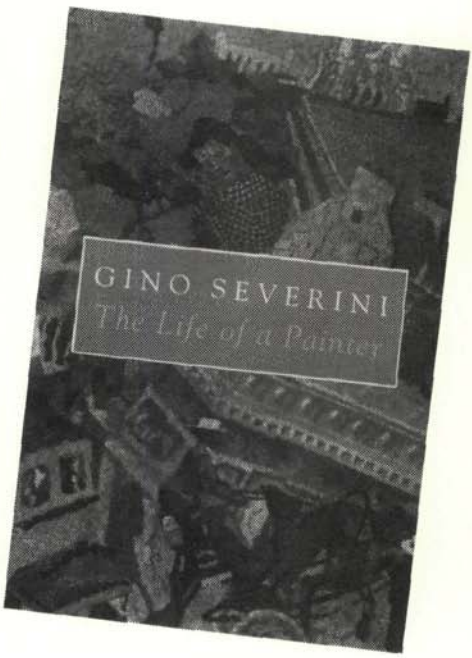

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